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The works of John Angell James

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ANGELL JAMES

ONEWHILE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN
CARRS LANE BIRMINGHAM

EDITED BY HIS SON.

VOL. IV.

ADDRESSED TO YOUNG WOME

LONDON: HAMILTON ADAMS & CO.
BIRMINGHAM: HUDSON & SON.
MDCCCLX.

DISCOURSES AND MEMOIRS, ADDRESSED TO YOUNG WOMEN

BY

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FEMALE PIETY:

OR THE

YOUNG WOMAN'S FRIEND AND GUIDE THROUGH LIFE TO IMMORTALITY.

The Chapters of "The Young Woman's Guide" were originally preached as Sermons, and the Author, under a sense of the difficulty and delicacy of the subject, determined to read them, contrary to his usual practice. And as he intended to publish them through the press also, he availed himself of the advantage which this afforded him, and read from the printed copy. The form of sermons is, therefore, retained throughout, and there occur repetitions and forms of expression not usual in printed compositions. The printing each sermon, as soon as it was composed, also deprived the Author of the opportunity of revision, which he would otherwise have had, in working up sermons into a treatise.

The Author, during the delivery of this course, acquired the power of reading his sermons with great effect. When he had previously happened to read a discourse, it was deprived of impressiveness to a degree far greater than could be imputed to the illness, or other accidental circumstance, which had caused him to depart from his usual method. He was always fond of reading quotations in his sermons, (justifying the practice on the ground that they were better than any thing he could have given of his own composition;) but he always read these extracts so badly that, whatever they might be, his hearers wished he had given them the meaning in his own words. He had a very great objection to read sermons (see his note to the funeral sermon for Mr Berry), and his opinion was not altered by his own success in this one instance.

The attendance on this series of sermons, though they were preached in the mornings of the Lord's Day, was greater than during any other which he ever delivered: and the demand for them in print has been proportionate, exceeding that of any other of his publications of the same size, except the companion volume to young men. Both were written to supply deficiencies in our religious literature, which the Author had practically felt.

The Author always considered reflections on a recent fact as the most impressive form of admonition, whether from the press or the pulpit. Mr Mark Wilks's memoir of Mademoiselle Cuvier laid hold of his imagination more than any similar death bed scene of which he had read; and the circumstances attending the last illnesses of the sisters S, were among the most striking incidents of the kind which he had ever witnessed. He did not so much select these occurrences as topics for an address, as feel himself impelled to print the reflections which they suggested to his own mind, lest by suppressing them he should have incurred the sense of guilt.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Female Piety, or the Young Woman's Friend and Guide through life to immortality .	7
The Flower Faded: a short Memoir of Clementine Cuvier, Daughter of Baron Cuvier, with Reflections	381
Memoir of Miss Martha S.	452
Memoir of Miss Ann S.	461

CHAPTER I.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE CONDITION OF WOMAN.

GALATIANS iii, 28.

There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

WOMAN was the finishing grace of the creation. Woman was the completeness of man's bliss in Paradise. Woman was the cause of sin and death to our world. The world was redeemed by the seed of the woman. Woman is the mother of the human race; our companion, counsellor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life; or our tempter, scourge, and destroyer. Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness, or our bitterest draught of sorrow, is mixed and administered by her hand. She not only renders smooth or rough our path to the grave, but helps or hinders our progress to immortality. In heaven we shall bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that blissful state; or amidst the torments of unutterable woe in another region, we shall deplore the fatality of her influence.

This work was delivered originally in a course of

monthly sermons, to which I was led by a conviction that woman, as regards her specific duties, is too much neglected in the ministrations of the sanctuary; an omission which must be traced to a morbid delicacy unworthy of the pulpit. Happily this reproach does not appertain to the press, to which perhaps, in the opinion of some, this subject ought to be exclusively consigned. But why? Can any good and valid reason be assigned for shutting out from the house of God instructions to so important a class of the community? Many persons almost instinctively shrink from such addresses, from a fear lest matters should be introduced at which modesty would blush, and by which the finer sensibilities would be wounded. There is a prudishness in such feelings which can be justified neither by reason nor revelation.

It may be as well to announce in the opening chapter that the whole course will be of a decidedly religious nature. For all the general directions and excellences of female character, I shall refer to the various works which on these topics have issued from the press. My subject is religion, my object is the soul, my aim is salvation. I view you, my female friends, as destined to another world, and it is my business to aid and stimulate you, "by patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality," and to obtain eternal life. I look beyond the painted and gaudy scene of earth's fading vanities, to the everlasting ages through which you must exist in torment or bliss; and, God helping me, it shall not be my fault if you do not live in comfort, die in peace, and inherit salvation.

I can think of no subject with which more appro-

priately to commence this work, than the influence of Christianity on the condition of woman.

Our first attention must be directed of course to the condition of the sex beyond the boundaries of Christendom.

It would seem from the words of the original denouncement upon Eve for her transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, that while yet the first pair were innocent, there was a more entire equality of condition and rights between the sexes than there has been after the fall. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This sounds like something penal, though perhaps some would regard it as merely predictive, and intended to describe the cruel and brutalising tendency of sin, in turning man, who ought to be the loving companion of his wife, into a tyrant. How fearfully, if predictive, this sentence has been fulfilled, the degradation of woman, her wrongs, her sorrows, and her vices, in many cases, most painfully attest.

History, which will ever be found to corroborate revelation, proves that in most Pagan and Mohammedan nations, whether ancient or modern, woman has been cruelly and wickedly sunk below her proper level in social and domestic life, "hated and despised from her birth, and her birth itself esteemed a calamity; in some countries not even allowed the rank of a moral and responsible agent; so tenderly alive to her own degradation that she acquiesces in the murder of her female offspring; immured from infancy; without education; married without her consent; in a multitude of instances sold by her parents; refused the confidence of her

husband, and banished from his table; on his death, doomed to the funeral pile, or to contempt that renders life a burden." In such a condition she has been the household drudge, or the mere object of passion. She has ministered to the gratification of man's indolence or appetite, but has not been his companion, his counsellor, or his comforter. In barbarous countries she has been a slave; in civilised ones very generally little better than a kept mistress. Her mind has been left untaught, as if incapable or unworthy of instruction. She has been not only imprisoned in seclusion by jealousy, but degraded and rendered vicious and miserable by polygamy. Sometimes worshipped as a goddess; next fondled as a toy; then punished as a victim, she could never attain to dignity, and even with all her brightest charms could rarely appear but as a doll or a puppet.

Exceptions to some extent may be made in favour of the polished Greeks and proud Romans: but only to some extent; for did time permit, and necessity require, it could be shewn that neither Athenian refinement nor Roman virtue gave to woman her just rank by the side of her husband, or her proper place in his affection, esteem, and confidence. The laws of Rome, it is true, secured to her greater liberty and consideration than she had before received; but still she was so treated even there as to sink into degradation disgraceful to her purity and destructive to her happiness. "No happy influence did she exert on the public or private welfare of the state. Politicians intrigued by her instrumentality; ambition combined with passion to corrupt her; and her liberty degenerated into licentiousness. Through her influence the streets of the capital were

sometimes deluged with its best blood: and to such an extent was her profligacy carried, that among the decrees against the licentiousness of female manners, enacted by the Senate during the reign of Tiberius, was one, 'that no woman whose grandfather, father, or husband was a Roman knight, should be allowed to make her person venal.' The laws of a nation are an instructive and faithful history of its manners. If such was the condition of a Roman lady, what must have been that of the subordinate classes? Neither Paganism nor Mohammedanism ever yet understood the female character, or conceded woman's just claims. In many nations the degradation has been excessive. You remember probably the reply of a Pagan mother, who having been expostulated with for the murder of her female child, contended that she had performed an act of mercy in sparing the babe the miseries of a woman's life. All travellers and all missionaries attest the fact of woman's humiliation, beyond the boundaries of revelation."*

If we go to the Bible, we shall learn that it is to Christianity, as contrasted even with Judaism, that woman owes her true elevation. Polygamy is, and ever must be, fatal to female dignity and happiness: this, or at any rate concubinage, was practised, no doubt under mistaken views, by the patriarchs; not that it was ever positively sanctioned by God, for from the beginning he made one woman for one man, and by the providential and remarkable fact of the general equality of the sexes

* The reader is referred for detailed statements of the condition of woman in Pagan and Mohammedan countries to a very able and interesting work by my late friend Dr. Cox, of Hackney, entitled, "Female Scripture Biography, with an Essay on what Christianity has done for Woman."

as to numbers, he still proclaims in unmistakable language the law of monogamy, but to use an expression of the apostle, "he winked at" these things: he did not regard it as innocent or convenient, yet he did not say much about it, or punish it, but left it to punish itself, which it most certainly did. If we examine the Levitical code we shall find that even it, though a Divine dispensation, contained some regulations which evinced that the time of woman's full emancipation from a state of inferiority had not yet arrived: and that it was reserved for the glorious and gracious economy under which we are placed, to raise the female sex to its just position and influence in society. Christianity as in other things, so in this, is an enlargement of human privileges; and among other blessings which it confers, is its elevation of woman to her proper place and influence in the family and in society.

Let us now consider what there is in Christianity that tends to elevate and improve the condition of woman.

To the oppressive and cruel customs of Mohammedanism and Paganism, in their treatment of the female sex, Christianity presents a beautiful and lovely contrast; while to the partial provisions for female rights in Judaism it adds a complete recognition of their claims. It is the glory of our holy religion, and a proof of its emanation from the Divine beneficence, that it is the enemy of oppression in every form and every condition, and gives to every one his due. It tramples on no right, it resents and resists all wrong: but no one of all the sons of men is so indebted to its merciful and equitable reign as woman. From Christianity woman

has derived her moral and social influence: yea, almost her very existence as a social being. The mind of woman, which many of the philosophers, legislators, and sages of antiquity doomed to inferiority and imbecility, Christianity has developed. The gospel of Christ in the person of its Divine Founder, has descended into this neglected mine, which even wise men had regarded as not worth the working, and brought up many a priceless gem, flashing with the light of intelligence, and glowing with the lovely hues of Christian graces. Christianity has been the restorer of woman's plundered rights, and has furnished the brightest jewels in her present crown of honour. Her previous degradation accounts, in part at least, for the instability of early civilisation. It is impossible for society to be permanently elevated where woman is debased and servile. Wherever females are regarded as inferior beings, society contains within itself the elements of dissolution, and the obstruction of all solid improvement. It is impossible that institutions and usages which oppose and stifle the instincts of our nature, and violate the revealed law of God, can be crowned with ultimate success. Society may change in its external aspect; may exhibit the glitter of wealth, the refinements of taste, the embellishments of art, or the more valuable attainments of science and literature; but if the mind of woman remain undeveloped, her taste uncultivated, and her person enslaved, the social foundations are insecure and the cement of society is weak. Wherever Christianity is understood and felt, woman is free. The gospel, like a kind angel, opens her prison doors and bids her walk abroad and enjoy the sunlight of reason, and breathe the invigorating air of intellectual

freedom. And in proportion as pure Christianity prevails this will be ever found to be the case.

But all this is vague and general assertion, and I will bring forward proofs of it.

Christianity elevates the condition of woman by its genius as a system of universal equity and benevolence. When it descended from heaven to earth, it was heralded into our world by the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace and good will to man." The offspring of infinite love, it partakes of the spirit, and reflects the character, of its Divine Parent. It is essentially and unalterably the enemy of all injustice, cruelty, and oppression: and the friend of all that is just, kind and courteous. The rough, the brutal, and the ferocious, are alien from its spirit; while the tender, the gentle, and the courteous, are entirely in unison with its nature. It frowns with indignant countenance upon tyranny, whether in the palace or the parlour, while it is the friend of liberty, and the patron of right. The man who understands its genius, and lives under its inspiration, whether he be a monarch, a master, a husband, or a father, must be a man of equity and love. Christianity inspires the purest chivalry; a chivalry shorn of vanity, purified from passion, elevated above frivolity; a chivalry of which the animating principle is love to God, and the scene of its operation the domestic circle, and not the public pageant. He who is unjust or unkind to any one, especially to the weaker sex, betrays a total ignorance of, or a manifest repugnance to, the practical influence of the gospel of Christ. It is a mistake to suppose that the faith of Jesus is intended only to throw a dim religious light over the gloom of the cloister, or to form the character of the devotee; on the contrary,

it is pre-eminently a social thing, and is designed as well as adapted to form a character which shall go out into the world in a spirit of universal benevolence: to such a character the oppressor or degrader of woman can make no pretensions.

The incarnation of Christ tended to exalt the dignity of the female sex. His assuming humanity has given a dignity to our nature which it had never received before, and could not have received in any other way. Christ is "the Pattern Man" of our race, in whom all the lines of humanity converge and unite, so far as the existence of our race goes. When he took man's nature, he vouchsafed to ally himself to all the members of the extended series by the actual adoption of a transmitted being, which gave him relationship to them. He not only became like men and dwelt among them, but he became man himself, an actual descendant from their first progenitor. He was made man. Human nature became more precious. By the manner of his birth, he associated himself with our nature. This appears to be the meaning of the apostle in his quotation of the eighth Psalm in the epistle to the Hebrews, to show the dignity conferred upon humanity, by its being assumed by so glorious a person, as our Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature was. If, then, manhood is honoured by Christ assuming it, how much more is woman exalted, who, in addition to this, was made the instrument of giving birth to the humanity of Christ? It is emphatically said by the apostle, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." In the person of the Virgin Mary, and by her giving birth to the holy being born of her, the sex was elevated. True, it was a personal distinc-

tion, that she should be the mother of our Lord's humanity: and (while she has been by the apostate Church of Rome wickedly exalted into an object of idolatrous homage) all generations justly call her blessed. Yet the honour is not limited to herself, but passes over to her sex, which she represented; and it is to this the apostles allude. He does not mention her, but dwells upon the abstract general term, "made of a woman." Every female on earth, from that day to this, has had a relative elevation, by and in that wonderful transaction. Woman was not the mother of God, as the Papists absurdly, and, as I think, blasphemously, say; but she was the mother of that humanity which was mysteriously united with Divinity. And does not this great fact proclaim, "Let the sex which alone was concerned in giving birth to the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, be ever held in high estimation."

The personal conduct of our Lord during his sojourn upon earth tended to exalt the female sex to a consideration before unknown. Follow him through the whole of his earthly career, and mark the attention which he most condescendingly paid to, and as condescendingly received from, the female sex. He admitted them to his presence, conversed familiarly with them, and accepted the tokens of their gratitude, affection, and devotedness. See him accompanying his mother to the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee. See him conversing with the woman of Samaria, instructing her ignorance, enduring her petulance, correcting her mistakes, awakening her conscience, converting her soul, and afterwards employing her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her neighbours. See him rebuking his disciples for discouraging the approach of mothers and their infants.

See him compassionating the widow of Nain, and restoring her son to life. See him in the little family of Bethany, blending his sympathies with the bereaved sisters; and on another occasion entering into familiar conversation with this same Martha and Mary, and faithfully rebuking one and kindly commending the other. See him receiving the offerings of those women who ministered to him of their substance. Witness the attendance of pious women upon him in the last scenes of his life. It was to Mary Magdalene that the honour of the first manifestation of the risen Saviour was made; and thus a woman was preferred to apostles, and made the messenger of the blissful news to them. "The frequent mention," says Doddridge, "which is made in the evangelists of the generous courage and zeal of pious women in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in those last scenes of his suffering, might very possibly be intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex, which probably in the sight of God has constituted by far the better half of mankind; and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyments of their lives." Compare this behaviour towards the sex, this chaste, holy, dignified conduct of our Lord, with the polygamy, licentiousness, and impurities of Mohammed, not merely as evidence of their respective claims, but as regards their influence upon the condition of woman: while the one did everything by example and by precept to corrupt, to debase, and to degrade

them, the other did everything to purify, to elevate, and to bless them. The conduct of the Arabian enthusiast and impostor, and the boasts of his followers and admirers in respect of him, are too revolting for description, almost for allusion. But on the contrary, what one syllable of the Saviour's utterances, or what one scene of his life, was there, which tainted the immaculate purity of his language, or left the slightest stain upon the more than snow-like sanctity of his character? What part of his conduct might not be unveiled and described before a company of the most modest, most delicate, and even most prudish-minded females in existence? But his treatment of woman raised her from her degradation without exalting her above her level. He rescued her from oppression without exciting her vanity; and invested her with dignity without giving her occasion for pride. While he allowed her not only to come into his presence, but to minister to his comfort; and while he conciliated her grateful and reverent affection, he inspired her with awe; and thus taught man how to behave to woman, and what return woman was to make to man. The conduct of Jesus Christ towards the female sex was one of the most attractive excellences of his beautiful character, though perhaps it is one of the least noticed. To him they must ever point, as not only the Saviour of their souls, but as the advocate of their rights and the guardian of their peace.

The actual abolition of polygamy by Christianity is a vast improvement in the condition of woman. Wherever polygamy prevails, the female sex must ever be in a state of degradation and misery. "Experience has abundantly and painfully proved that polygamy debases and brutalises both the body and the soul, and renders

society incapable of those generous and refined affections, which, if duly cultivated, would be found to be the inheritance even of our fallen nature." Where is there an instance in which polygamy has not been the source of many and bitter calamities in the domestic circle and in the State? Where has it reared a virtuous and heaven-taught progeny? Where has it been distinguished for any of the moral virtues, or rather where has it not been distinguished for the most fearful degeneracy of manners? By this practice, which has prevailed so extensively through nearly all countries and all ages in which Christianity has not been known or has not been paramount, marriage loses all its tenderness, its sanctity, and its reciprocal confidence; the cup of connubial felicity is exchanged for that of mere animal pleasure; woman panders to the appetite of man, instead of ministering to his comfort, and the home assumes much of the character of a brothel. There may be several mistresses, but there can be only one wife; and though there may be many mothers, they are without a mother's affection; presenting a scene of endless envy and jealousy, before which domestic comfort must ever retire, leaving mere sensual gratification. No stimulus to improvement, no motive to fidelity, no ambition to please, can be felt by a wife who may be supplanted the next month by a new favourite. And in such circumstances there is no room and little occasion for the display of those virtues which constitute female honour. Here, then, is the glorious excellence of Christianity; it revived and re-established the original institute of marriage, and restored to woman her fortune, her person, her rank, and her happiness, of all of which she had been cheated by polygamy; and it thus raised

the female sex to the elevation to which they were destined by their wise and beneficent Creator. True it is that Christianity has not effected this great change, so beneficial not only to the sex, but to society, by direct, explicit, and positive precept; yet it has done so by an implication so clear that there can be no mistake as to the reality of the command, or the universality of its obligation, for all its provisions, precepts, and promises, proceed on the supposition of each husband being the husband but of one wife. And the springs of national prosperity rise from beneath the family hearth, and the domestic constitution is the mould where national character is cast, and that mould must of necessity take its form from the unity, sanctity, and inviolability of marriage.

The jealousy with which Christianity guards the sanctity of the marriage tie must ever be regarded as having a most favourable influence upon the condition of woman. Let this be relaxed or impaired, and that moment woman sinks in dignity, in purity, and in happiness. There have been nations in which the facility of divorce took the place of polygamy, and of course was accompanied with some of its vices, and many of its miseries too. This was eminently the case with ancient Rome after the early times of the Republic, and most instructive are the examples in the annals of its history, and the allusions to them in the pages of its poets. Let the nuptial tie be weakened, and the wife live in perpetual fear, because her union to her husband is placed in jeopardy by a law under which he may at any time, at the instigation of passion or caprice, dissolve the bond between them, and without either penalty, remorse, or shame, dismiss her from his home, and there is an end

to her peace, and perhaps to her purity. For it is to be recollected that it is she who has most to dread from the licence of divorce. She is likely to be the victim of such a liberty. With what devout and reverential gratitude should she then turn to that Divine Teacher who has interposed his authority to strengthen the marriage bond, and to guard it from being severed at the demand of illicit passion, or the dictates of humour or caprice. How should she rejoice to hear Him say, "Whoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, doth commit adultery." The indulgence of greater latitude and liberty in this matter granted to the Jews was thus superseded by Christianity; a greater security was provided for woman's honour and felicity; and a broader basis laid for domestic harmony and happiness. If it were only for this, Christianity deserves the gratitude of mankind. But it is only half its glory that it has abolished the custom of having many wives: its crowning achievement is that it has protected the rights, the dignity, and the comfort of the one wife. It has shut out intruders from her home, and guaranteed the safe and permanent possession of it to herself.

I may surely mention the equal participation of religious blessing to which women are admitted by the Christian religion. How explicitly and how firmly has the apostle claimed for woman all the blessings obtained by Christ for the human race, where he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." There is the charter granting to woman all the blessings of salvation; there is the proof of

woman's equality in the sight of God; there is woman's claim to her just rank in the institutes of man. There is not a blessing necessary to eternal life, which she does not receive in the same measure and in the same manner as the other sex. There is a popular tradition among the Mohammedans, prevalent among them to this day, that women are not permitted to enter paradise: the houris of that region being specially created in their stead. What degradation is there in such an idea! But it is consistent with the spirit, and harmonises with the genius, of Mohammedanism, which regards woman more as the slave of man's passions, than as the companion of his life. Christianity places the wife by the side of the husband; the daughter by the side of the father; the sister by the side of the brother; and the maid by the side of the mistress, at the altar of the family; in the meeting of the church; at the table of the Lord; and in the congregation of the sanctuary. Male and female meet together at the cross, and will meet in the realms of glory. Can anything more effectually tend to raise and sustain the condition of woman than this? God in all his ordinances, Christ in his glorious undertaking, and the Holy Spirit in his gracious work, gave her her proper place in the world, by giving her a proper place in the church. It is for her with peculiar emphasis to say, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places." And well have women understood their privileges, for look into our congregations and churches, and see how largely they are composed of females. How many more of their sex, than of the other, avail themselves of the offer of gospel mercy, and come under the influence of

religion. It is in the female bosom, however we may account for the fact, that piety finds a home on earth. The door of woman's heart is often thrown wide open to receive the Divine guest, when man refuses Him an entrance. And it is by thus yielding to the power of godliness, and reflecting upon others the beauties of holiness, that she maintains her standing and her influence in society. Under the sanctifying power of religion she ascends to the glory, not only of an intelligent, but of a spiritual, existence; not only gladdens by her presence the solitary hours of man's existence, and beguiles by her converse and sympathy the rough and tedious paths of his life; but in some measure modifies, purifies, and sanctifies him, by making him feel how awful goodness is.

But the finishing stroke which Christianity gives in elevating the condition of women, is, by inviting and employing their energies and influence in promoting the spread of religion in the world; and thus carrying out, through them as well as men, the great purposes of God in the redemption of the world by the mission of his Son. To them, in common with men, the apostle says, "That ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The honour so liberally bestowed upon the pious women of antiquity, of ministering to the personal wants of the Saviour, and of being so constantly about his person, was the least of the distinctions designed for them by our holy religion. They bear an exalted place in the labours and offices enjoined and instituted in apostolic times for the setting up of Christ's Kingdom in the world. How instructive and impressive is it to hear Paul say, "Help those women which laboured with me

in the gospel." What a register of names and offices of illustrious females do we find in Romans xvi. Priscilla, his helper; "Mary, who bestowed much labour on us;" "Tryphena and Tryphosa, who laboured in the Lord;" "Phebe, the servant of the church at Cenchrea," who was sent to the church at Rome, and entrusted with so momentous a commission as to bear to that community of Christians that epistle of the apostle, which, if we may lawfully compare one portion of Scripture with another, is the most precious portion of Divine revelation. In addition to all this, there can be but little doubt that in the primitive church, not only were women occasionally endowed by the Spirit with the miraculous gifts of prophesying, but they were also employed in the office of deaconesses. The Christian church in modern times, has gone backward in the honour put upon the female character. The primitive age of Christianity was in advance of ours, in the respect paid to the female sex by officially employing them in the services of the church, and in the wisdom which made use of their available and valuable resources. It has been said that the usages of society have somewhat changed since that time, so as to render the services of women to their own sex less necessary now than they were then, when the friendly and social intercourse of the sexes was more restricted, and females were kept in greater seclusion. Some truth, no doubt, there is in this assertion; but perhaps not so much as is imagined by some. Both general and sacred history represent women in the times referred to as mingling in the society and sharing the occupations of the other sex.

I now remark that not only does Christianity thus tend, by its own nature and provisions, to exalt the

female character, but it has accomplished this wherever it has prevailed. If we consult the pages of history, whether ancient or modern, whether eastern or western, we shall find that wherever the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been successful, there it has achieved the emancipation of woman from her thraldom, and rescued her from degradation. I refer to modern Europe and America in proof of this. What a contrast in this respect do those countries present to all Pagan and Mohammedan nations! Is it not a triumph and a trophy of Christianity to be able to point to the most polished nations of the globe as being, at any rate, professedly Christian; and at the same time to say, "Look at the improved condition of the female sex?" And may I not affirm that woman's emancipation and elevation are in proportion to the purity of that Christianity which has thus been diffused?

If we refer to the records of modern missions, we shall find abundant proof of what the gospel does for the elevation of the female character. It has abolished the Suttee in India, and the widow is no longer immolated on the pile which consumes her departed husband. It has stopped the drudgery of the wives of all savage tribes, the incarcerating seclusion of Mohammedan and Papal nations, the polygamy, the infanticide, and the concubinage of all countries whither it has gone. Yes, Christianity has in modern times proved itself, in all parts of the world, woman's emancipator and friend. It has brought her from under the disastrous influence of the pale crescent of the impostor of Mecca, and placed her in all the irradiating and enlivening splendour of the Sun of Righteousness. It has rescued her from the baleful power of the crucifix, and brought her

within the elevating attraction of the cross. But there is another way in which we may see that Christianity, even in this Christian and Protestant nation, has benefited and raised the condition of millions of once wretched and degraded women; made such not by their own misconduct, but by the vices and cruelty of their husbands. How many wives have been reduced to a kind of domestic slavery by the drunkenness, infidelity, and tyranny of those who had pledged themselves to love and cherish them? Christianity in its power has in myriads of instances laid hold of the hearts of such men, and changed them from vice to holiness: and the husband appeared as much changed as the man; and among other evidences of the reality of the change, and the manifestations of its excellence, was his altered conduct at home, where his wife became his companion, instead of being his drudge, his slave, and his victim. Christianity has thus carried out its genius and its precepts in the actual elevation of the female character wherever it has gone. The chivalry of the middle ages which combined religion, valour, and gallantry, whimsical as the institution seems, no doubt did something to accomplish this end. I do not dispute the truth of the remark made by a French writer, quoted in a popular work entitled "Woman's Mission," where he says that women shut up in their castellated towers, civilized the warriors who despised their weakness, and rendered less barbarous the passions and the prejudices which themselves shared. It was they who directed the savage passions and brute force of the men to an unselfish aim, the defence of the weak; and added humanity to courage, which had been the only virtue previously recognised. But even chivalry derived its

existence in some measure from religion. And after all, how inferior in its nature and how different in its influence, was that system of romance to the dignified principles and holy influence of Christianity. It did very well to figure at the joust and the tournament; in the hall of the baron, and in the circle of the fair; but its influence in the domestic scene was very slight as compared with that of the institutions of the New Testament. It was rather the exaggeration to extravagance of female rights and privileges, than an intelligent concession of them under a sense of justice, and in obedience to the Divine authority; and it may be questioned whether many an illustrious knight did not when the hour of imagination had passed away, and the ardour of passion had cooled, in the absence of Christian principles, crush and break the heart which he had been so anxious to win. It is the glory of Christianity that, instead of appealing to the imagination, the senses, and the passions, it supplies principles which are rooted in the soul, and sway the conscience; and that instead of leading its possessor to expend his admiration of woman in the exciting scenes of public amusement, it teaches and influences him first of all to contemplate her where her charms are less meretriciously adorned, in the retirement of social intercourse, and then to enjoy them within the hallowed circle of domestic life. It allows of no senseless adoration like that which chivalry promoted, and which from its very excess is likely to be followed by recoil or collapse. What Christianity does for woman is to fit her to be neither the goddess nor the slave, but the friend and companion, of man, and to teach man to consider her in this honourable and amiable aspect.

Do we not see in all this a beautiful exhibition of the transcendent excellence of our holy religion? In every view that we can take of Christianity, whether we contemplate it in its aspects towards another world or towards this; in its relations to God or society; in its sublime doctrines or its pure morality; we see a form of inimitable beauty, sufficient to captivate every heart but that which is petrified by false philosophy, avowed infidelity, or gross immorality. But never does it appear more lovely than in its relation to woman. With what equity does it hold the balance between the sexes! With what kindness does it throw its shield over the weaker vessel! With what wisdom does it sustain the rank and claims of those whose influence is so important to society, and yet so limit their claims that they shall not be carried to such a length as to defeat their end! With what nice discrimination does it fix woman's place where her power can be most advantageously employed for the cultivation of her own virtues and the benefit of society! "Behold Christianity, then, walking forth in her purity and greatness to bless the earth, diffusing her light in every direction, distributing her charities on either hand, quenching the flames of lust and the fires of ambition, silencing discord, spreading peace, and creating all things new. Angels watch her progress, celebrate her influence, and anticipate her final triumphs! The moral creation brightens beneath her smiles and owns her renovating power. At her approach man loses his fierceness, and woman her chains; each becomes blessed in the other, and God is glorified in both.*"

May we not affirm that the treatment of woman by Judaism and Christianity is one of the proofs of their

* Dr Cox's Essay.

divine origin? We have seen already how much superior the later dispensation was to the earlier one, as in other particulars, so in respect of the matter I am treating of here. But they must always be associated together. The spiritual religion of Christ was the development of the great truths prefigured in the symbols of the ceremonial religion of Moses. I have shown how both Mohammedanism and Paganism degrade the female character and sex. It would seem therefore that man left to himself would never have set up a religion which dealt equitably and kindly with them. And what has infidelity, without a religion, done for them? What would it do for them? Degrade them by demoralizing them. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness, infidels at heart, have put on the cloak of the philosopher, and maxims the most licentious have found their way into works making high pretensions to morality, and assuming the office of teachers of the age. Atheism, the most undisguised, has made its appearance, and alas, that it should boast of a priestess, entitled to distinction on other grounds, to conduct its worship at the shrine, and upon the altar, of chance! Before scepticism had reached this depth of error, and arrived at the gloomy region of a godless void, while yet it lingered on the shores of Deism, it manifested its demoralizing tendency. Hume taught that adultery, when known, was a slight offence; and when unknown, no offence at all. Bolingbroke openly and violently attacked every important truth and every serious duty; particularly he did what he could to license lewdness, and cut up chastity and decency by the roots. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the most serious of the early English deists, declared that the indulgence of lust is no more to be

blamed than the thirst of a fever, or the drowsiness of lethargy. Nor have modern infidels been behind their predecessors. Godwin and Owen attacked the marriage tie. And let the annals of the first French revolution, that terrible eruption from the volcano of atheism, tell by the history of Mirabeau, the type of its morals, what infidelity would do to corrupt and degrade the female sex. Woman's virtue, dignity, honour, and happiness, are nowhere safe but under the protection of the Word of God. The Bible is the ægis of the female sex. Beneath this protection they are secure in their rights, their dignity, and their peace. It is their vine and fig tree, under which in calm repose they may enjoy the shade and relish the fruit. It protects their purity from taint, and their peace from disturbance. Let woman know her friend, and her enemy too. An infidel of either sex is the foe of our species, either individually or collectively viewed; but a female infidel is the most dangerous and destructive of the furies, from whom in her suicidal career the virtuous of her own sex recoil with horror, and whom the vicious regard as the abettor, though it may be unintentionally, of their crimes. Woman! regard thy Saviour for the next world as thine Emancipator for this present one: love the Bible as the charter of thy liberty, and the guardian of thy bliss: and consider the church of Christ as thine asylum from the wrongs of oppression and the arts of seduction.

Let woman seek to discharge her obligations to Christianity. Grateful she ought to be, for immense are the favours which have been conferred upon her by it. It is enough to demand her thankfulness, that in common with man, she is the object of Divine love, redeeming mercy, and the subject of immortal hope;

but in addition to this, she is rescued from oppression and exalted to honour in the present world. In regard to this, your obligations to Christianity are immense. You owe infinitely more to it than you ever reflect upon, or than you will ever be able to cancel. Often as you look round upon your condition in society, and especially as often as you contrast your situation with that of women in Pagan countries, let a glow of gratitude warm your heart and add intensity to the fervour with which you exclaim, "Precious Bible." Yes, doubly precious to you as your friend for both worlds. How then shall woman discharge her obligations? In two ways. First, in yielding up her heart and life to the influence and service of her benefactor, in faith, holiness, and love. Female piety is the best, the only sincere expression of female gratitude to God. An irreligious woman is also an ungrateful one. She who loves not Christ, whomsoever else she may love, and however chaste and pure that love may be, is living immeasurably below her obligations, and has a stain of guilt upon her heart and her conscience, which no other virtue can efface or conceal.

Woman's obligations should also be discharged by seeking to extend to others that benign system which has exerted so beneficial an influence upon herself. Of all the supporters of our missionary schemes, whether they are formed to evangelise the heathen abroad, or reform the sinful at home, women should be, as indeed they generally are, the most zealous, liberal, and prayerful supporters. Wherever she turns her eye over the distant regions of our earth, at least wherever Paganism or Mohammedanism throw their baleful shadow (and alas, how large a portion of the earth that is!) there

she beholds her sex degraded and oppressed. From China's vast domain, from India's sunny plains, from Persia's flowery gardens, from the snows of Arctic regions, from the sterile deserts of Arabia, and beneath the burning line in Africa, woman lifts her voice amidst her wrongs, her woes, and her miseries, piteously imploring, "Come over and help us." The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, but her groans are deeper, her cries louder, than any others. Borne upon the wings of every breeze, and floated on every wave that touches our shores from those regions of sin and sorrow, comes her petition to Christian females in this country for the blessings of Christianity. Cold, thankless, and unfeeling must be that heart which is unaffected by such an appeal, and makes no effort to respond to it; which prompts to no interest in our missionary schemes, and leads to no liberality in their support. The Millennium will be especially woman's jubilee, and as no groan is deeper than hers during the reign of sin and sorrow, so no joy will be louder than hers under the reign of Christ. It belongs, therefore, to her to be most fervent in the cry of the church, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSPICUOUS PLACE WHICH WOMAN OCCUPIES IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

1 Peter iii, 5.

In the old time the holy women also.

It will probably be objected against some of the subjects selected for this work, that they are not exclusively appropriate to the class of persons to whom they are addressed; that is, Young Women. This, however, so far from being a fault, is an excellence. Most conditions of human life are prospective, and have not only some proximate objects and duties connected with them, but also some ultimate ones to which the others are preparatory; and he who would lead persons to the right discharge of the whole range of their obligations, must set before them the future as well as the present, especially when due preparation for after years must not only be made in the present, but must be considered to a considerable extent the object and design of the present. Neither childhood nor youth is an ultimate condition of human existence, but each leads on, looks to, and prepares for, manhood or womanhood. Surely it must be appropriate then to those who are already

arrived at adult age, or are fast approaching it, to have the whole view of their future condition laid before them, at least in general outline. How else can they prepare for it?

Those to whom this volume is addressed, are supposed to have arrived at that period of youth, when the judgment is sufficiently matured and reflective, to be capable of studying and appreciating their future relations and duties: and therefore ought to have the subject laid before them. Who can be rightly educated for any future situation, if that is concealed till all its obligations and responsibilities burst suddenly upon them? True, there is in some minds an almost instinctive kind of perception of what is proper to be done in any new conjuncture of circumstances, so that, almost without training, they are prepared for whatever situation is before them. But this is not the case with all. The greater number of mankind must, as far as possible, be trained for their various situations in life. As in the education of a boy, especially when learning a trade or profession, the future tradesman, master, father, and citizen, must be set before him as that for which he must prepare himself; so in the training of young women, the whole of womanhood in its full expansion, ripened excellences, and complete relations, obligations, and responsibilities, must be laid before them. We know that there is much which can be learnt only from experience, yet there is much also that may be learnt by observation, reading, and reflection. Mothers, governesses, authors and preachers, who take up the subject, should ever bear in recollection that the girl is to develope into the woman; and in teaching the girl,

should ever have their eye fixed ultimately upon the woman, and should with all possible earnestness fix the eye of the girl also upon her future womanhood. Not that she is to be so taken up with the remote as to neglect the proximate; with the future as to neglect the present; or to acquire a precocious matronly air and gravity, which will repress the ardour and vivacity of youth, and, by anticipated cares and solicitudes, go out to meet half-way the coming troubles of life. But remember, my young female friends, and the lesson cannot be too deeply impressed upon your minds, that the seeds of woman's life-long excellences must be sown in the spring-time of existence; and it must be done in part by her own hand, when aided and taught by others to prepare the soil. The flowers of womanly excellence, which she would wish to grow in her future character, must be previously and carefully selected, and be contemplated and anticipated by her in all their full-blown beauty and their richest fragrance, even while she is yet in youth.

With these remarks as my justification in presenting to the younger of the sex what in fact appertains to the more advanced in years, I now proceed to the subject of the present chapter.

When we consider the importance of woman in the great human family, it would be strange if in a volume given by inspiration of God, for regulating the conduct and promoting the happiness of mankind, she had no place assigned to her commensurate with the influence she is formed to exert. The Bible gives us an account of the origin and construction of society, and is designed, among other and still higher purposes, to direct its

movements, and promote its welfare. This it could not do, if it left out woman; or failed to bring her prominently forward; or did not prescribe with much form and detail, her rank, her mission, and her duties. In the coins which were struck in the reigns of our William and Mary, when the wife was queen regnant, the busts of both husband and wife were represented; the king in front, and the queen behind: and if a frontispiece were designed for the history of our race as recorded in the Bible, man and woman should be exhibited in something of a similar manner, with this inscription round the two-fold portrait, "Male and Female created he them."

The subject of this chapter was entered upon in the last: it will be here continued and expanded into wider dimensions. Man of course, is the chief subject of revealed truth. He occupies there, as he does in society, the first place. More is said of him, to him, and by him, than applies to woman. He is the prime actor, but not the sole one, in the great drama of Providence, as it is developed in the pages of inspiration. His companion in pilgrimage is brought forward into notice, and is neither lost in his shadow, nor only occasionally peeps out from behind his more portly form and loftier stature. Her name and history; her virtues and vices; her services and sorrows, occupy a considerable space in the holy Book. She has no right to complain that she is overlooked or forgotten, or that she is thrust into a corner and hidden from observation. There is more than enough said about her to make her contented. She ought to be thankful, and without Divine grace, may even be tempted to be vain. She cannot be deprived

of self-respect, or of the respect of others, on account of the manner in which she is treated in the Scriptures. In this respect the Bible stands in bright and beautiful contrast to the Koran.

We shall first of all advert to the account which the Bible gives of woman's creation and fall, in the book of Genesis. We would, in passing, remark, that it is to revelation, and to that alone, that we are indebted for our knowledge of the origin of the human species. Without the Mosaic account of the creation, we should know neither the date nor the source of the family of man. There is no other oracle which can give a response to the question, "Whence came we?" This furnishes an answer, and satisfies the enquirer: not as some would pretend, with a mere allegorical history, but with a veritable fact. I need not recite the details of the scenes of Paradise, but only refer to them. It is at once a beautiful and melancholy record. We there see woman as she came from the hand of the Creator, with a body combining every charm which could captivate the being for whose companionship she was designed; and a soul possessing every virtue that could adorn her character, and make her an object of reverent affection. Her creation was peculiar, but not unworthy of the Great Being that made her, of herself, or of him from whose own body she was derived. Her origin seemed to dignify both her husband and herself. She was formed of organised and vitalized matter, and not of mere dust; here was her distinction. Who can describe, or who conceive, the thoughts or emotions of this holy pair at their first interview! Our great bard has attempted it in his immortal verse, where he says,

"I beheld her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
With what all earth or heaven could bestow
To make her amiable; on she came,
Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen,
And guided by his voice—
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:—
Thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
Before me: Woman is her name; of man
Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul."

Painters and sculptors have joined with poets, to represent to the senses and the imagination the first woman in all her untainted loveliness. It is the Scriptures, be it recollected, that supply to them the enrapturing subject of their art.

Thus far we see woman, man's companion in holiness and bliss, tenanting with him the garden of Eden, enjoying its beauties, and helping to preserve them. With him, joining in the morning hymn and vesper song. Confessing no sin, for they had committed none; and disburdening themselves of no care, for none pressed upon them. All was praise, while their own notes of thanksgiving, blended with the melodies of the grove and the music of the fields, led even the ear of God to listen with delight, and to say, "It is good."

Alas, how soon and how suddenly changed was this scene of Paradisaic bliss! Man was placed in Eden, not as we shall be in heaven, if we are so happy as to

reach it, in a state of confirmed happiness; but as we are now upon earth, in a condition of trial. His submission to God must be tested; and this was done in a manner that exactly suited his condition. A garden as a residence became his state of innocence: and the fruit of a particular tree equally well suited his circumstances for the proof of his entire and implicit subjection. The test was as easy as it was rational and suitable. Traditions of the state of primeval felicity are current among many nations. They are discoverable in Grecian and Roman poetry; in the fables of the gardens of the Hesperides; and in the pleasing fiction of the poet's golden age. To induce Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit was the scheme of Satan for his fall. It is difficult to conceive in what other way he could tempt them. And how did he succeed? You know the melancholy sequel. The assault of the tempter was made upon woman. She was the selected victim of his wiles. It is evident, therefore, that he regarded her while in a state of innocence, as more easily to be vanquished than man; and considered her, even then, as the weaker vessel. At the same time, does it not seem as if he had marked her out from the beginning, as the chief instrument for accomplishing his future purposes of mischief towards the family of man? Events have justified the sagacity of his malice: for to her influence how much may be traced of the crimes and calamities which desolate our earth. He saw in the conduct of the first pair, the love which woman inspires and cherishes, and was confident that if he could subdue her, he might leave her to subdue the man.

The apostle in referring to this event, says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was

first in the transgression." From the very creation, woman has shown a feebler power of resistance, a greater pliancy of disposition, than man. How Satan knew this, we are not informed; but that he did know it, is evident from his commencing the assault on Eve instead of Adam. The passage just quoted seems to imply all this. It is not meant that Adam did not sin, and was not deceived by the tempter, but that the woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than he would have done; and that the temptation as applied to her mind, would have been ineffectual on him. To tempt and seduce him to sin, there needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the serpent, but through her irresistible allurements. Some have supposed that Adam was not at all deceived by the tempter: that he saw at once all his suggestions were lies; but that foreseeing what Eve had done, how she had plunged herself into ruin, he, out of mere love to her, and with his eyes open, determined to share her fate. But the apostle's words do not necessarily convey this: but merely that he was not deceived first, nor directly, by the tempter, but after, and by his wife. Her fall was occasioned by the deception of Satan alone; his by the deception of Satan, aided by the persuasion of the woman.*

Having considered the Scriptural account of woman's condition at the creation, and the means by which, through her, the human race was brought into its present state of sin and misery, we may next notice the very explicit and frequent mention which is made in the Scriptures of her numerous relations in social life, with

* See Barnes's Notes on the passage.

the descriptions it gives of the various characters of women. It certainly tends deeply to impress us with the importance of woman, and to raise her in her own and in our estimation, to see how constantly she is brought before us on the sacred page, in every part which she fills in life, as if the duties connected with each were of vast consequence to society. Not one is omitted; all are recognised and dwelt upon. Woman is ever before us in one or other of her many relations to the community.

Not only is there much said about the son, but also about the daughter. This relationship is not only included in the generic term of children, but it is also set out by itself. How commonly is it mentioned in connection with the children of the other sex, "and the sons and the daughters" are spoken of. A beautiful instance of which we have in the words of the psalmist, "that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; and our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Or, as "corner-pillars, wrought like those of a palace," that is in their fittest and best proportions, combining strength, beauty, and symmetry, both of body and of soul: than which, no comparison can be more elegant and delicate. In the exquisite poetry of the Hebrews, how commonly is this relationship employed as the metaphor of countries, states, and cities! Jerusalem comes before us as "the daughter of Zion," sometimes jubilant in her prosperity, at others, as in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, covered with sackcloth and bathed in tears.

The word sister occurs almost in every portion of the Word of God, like a floweret, lowly and lovely amidst others of larger growth and more imposing form and

colour. How sweet and gentle a spirit is sometimes seen in a sister's form amidst her brothers' more robust ones; and what a softening influence does the spell of her fascinating tenderness throw over their ruder natures. We are thus reminded by Scripture, that the younger female branches of the family are to be thought of as having their separate claims upon parental regard and brotherly affections. How many families are laid open in the Bible to our view, of which the sisters, as well as the brothers, are brought prominently into notice.

How much may it be supposed would be said about the wife: and how much is said about that close and endearing relation. To form the character, and direct the conduct of the wife, is worth all the pains that have been bestowed by innumerable writers; and we might have been very sure, even before we had read a page of revelation, that much would be there found touching this relationship. The book of Proverbs, that admirable directory for domestic and social life, is quite a manual for wives, as well as for every other member of the family circle. Unusual pains seem taken for the right formation of her character. How frequently and how impressively does Solomon refer to woman, as sustaining this close and tender relation. In what exalted and glowing terms does he speak of it, when it comprehends the graces and the excellences which it should always possess, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing." "A prudent wife is from the Lord." Who has ever read, or can read, without admiration, the beautiful description of a virtuous woman, in the closing chapter of the Proverbs? Can we wonder that he who had this elevated idea of the value of such a companion, should

again and again exhort a husband to live joyfully with the wife of his youth, and forsaking all others, cleave to her alone? In this he did but copy the beautiful and poetic picture of connubial happiness which had been furnished to him by his father David, if indeed he was the author of the Psalm, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table." "The vine," says Bishop Horne, "a lowly plant raised with tender care, becoming by its luxuriance, its beauty, its fragrance, and its clusters, the ornament and glory of the house to which it is joined, and by which it is supported, forms the finest imaginable emblem of a fair, virtuous, and faithful wife. The olive trees planted by the inhabitants of eastern countries round their banqueting places in their gardens, to cheer the eye by their verdure and to refresh the body by their cooling shade, do no less aptly and significantly set forth the pleasure which parents feel at the sight of a numerous and flourishing offspring."

On the other hand, Solomon directs all the powers of his bitter eloquence and irony, against the degraded woman, whose deadly work none has ever signalised with more holy indignation. How does he brand the crime of the harlot in the second and fifth chapters of the book of Proverbs; and with what awful correctness describe the conduct of the adulteress in the seventh. Nor does he stop here, but descends to the characters of women, who, though less guilty than those to whom we have just alluded, are still deserving of severe reprobation, "The foolish woman who plucketh her house down with her hands:" "the brawling woman, whose society is more intolerable than dwelling in a corner of the house-top, or in the wilderness:" "the woman that

maketh ashamed, who is a rottenness in the bones of her husband :" "the odious woman, whose marriage is one of the four things for which the earth is disquieted, and which it cannot bear :" "the fair woman without discretion, whose beauty is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout :" "the contentious wife, that continual dropping on a very rainy day." This same Solomon, at the period when he had reached a penitent and reformed old age, and when all the events of his life had passed in review before him, is compelled to confess, that he had sought in vain for a woman after his own heart : "I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands : whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her : but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, (saith the Preacher,) counting one by one, to find out the account ; which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not : one man among a thousand have I found ; but a woman among all those have I not found." Let not this passage, however, be mistaken, as if it meant that it was Solomon's opinion that the number of good women is inferior to the number of good men. Observation and general testimony assure us that this is not the truth. We are to consider where he made his enquiry for female virtue, and under what circumstances it was made. He who had crowded his court with wives and concubines, could little expect to find female excellence in such a situation. Instead of concentrating his affections on one woman as his wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, and seeking his happiness in drinking with her the sweet cup of connubial bliss, he had gathered round him in his harem, for pride and sensuality, a multitude of women, amidst whose jealousies and contentions he could no more find

happiness, than he could virtue amidst their illicit pleasures. From such a scene virtue would retire abashed and weeping. If, therefore, in this passage, he satirised the sex, he did it on unjust, unwise, and unmanly grounds. "But," says Dr. Wardlaw, "I am far from thinking that he here speaks the language of a disappointed and waspish satirist. He rather utters the feeling of an abased and self-dissatisfied penitent, of one who had felt it to be 'an evil and a bitter thing' to depart as he had done from God; who remembered 'the wormwood and the gall;' who perceived and lamented the folly and the wickedness of all those 'inventions,' by which himself and others had sought to find out happiness apart from the favour and the ways of God."

If we speak of woman as a mother, how often does that endearing relationship come before us in holy Scripture; both literally and metaphorically; in the Old Testament and in the New; in the way of example and of precept. The maternal relationship is the theme of constant reference, both for the sake of illustrating other subjects, and for enforcing its own claims as those of the female head of the household. Had this character been omitted, or only introduced occasionally, and then invested with no more than a second-rate importance, the Bible would have been wanting in one of its sweetest harmonies with the feelings of nature, and one of its strongest appeals to the sympathies of humanity: and we should have doubted if it had come from him who created woman and gave her as a help-meet for man. The paternal character and relation are maintained in their primary rank, authority, and dignity: no invasion is made upon the prerogative, or usurpation of the rights of the father; he is not called to yield his place of rule,

his supremacy of condition, to the mother; and yet how is all her proper rank and station and influence maintained. There she is exhibited as being in the family circle, if not the circumference which includes all, yet in one sense as the centre in which husband, children, and servants, all meet. How resonant are the Scriptures with that sweet and tender name, how redolent with the fragrance of that odoriferous word, how rich with the ornament of that beautiful term, mother. There, is sustained the poet's declaration

> "A mother is a mother still:
> The holiest thing alive."

If the mother's importance be not known, her claims not conceded, her influence not felt, her duties not rightly discharged, it is not the fault of the Bible, which is the friend of society by exalting that relationship. Nor is the mistress of the family overlooked or forgotten nor her duties left out of consideration.

The widow, that name of desolation, that sorrowful epithet, that type of woe, meets us at every turn. She passes before us in her weeds and in her tears, leading in her hand her fatherless children, and saying to us, "Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." More is said about, and for, and to, this bereaved one, than any other class of women: a circumstance which exhibits with uncommon force and beauty the compassion of God. But there is a discrimination on this subject which shows the wisdom as well as tenderness of God. Young widows are admonished, while aged and helpless ones are comforted.

Nor is the female servant left out. A place for her is found among the various other and higher ranks and

conditions of her sex. Her humble lot is recognised amidst the provisions and commands of the Law, and was announced and defended by the thunders of Mount Sinai. We find it protected by precept and illustrated by example, as if woman in the lowest grade of society should not be overlooked in the Bible, that blessed and glorious charter of rights and privileges. There the little maid lifts up her head among the queens and princesses of Scripture history.

But the most impressive and important point of view in which the subject can be placed, and the most convincing proof of the effect produced by the Scriptures with regard to woman, is the very great number and variety of female examples which they contain. It is one of the surpassing excellences of the Bible, that it is replete with narrative, history, and biography, and thus, apart from its sacred character and its momentous importance, is one of the most interesting books in the world. It is full, not only of precept, but of living acting patterns of the virtues which it inculcates, and of the vices which it prohibits. It is a complete picture gallery, in which we see portraits of every size, from the miniature to the full-length painting; and in every degree of representation, from the mere outline to the most finished production of the artist's pencil. Among these it would have been strange if female characters had been wanting. And they are not wanting. There, amidst kings, priests, warriors, and prophets, are to be seen the portraits of "the holy women of the old time, who trusted in God," as well as of those who disgraced themselves and dishonoured their sex. In the great drama of life, as it passes before us in the Bible, no mean or inconsiderable part is assigned to female cha-

racters. Woman's place among the dramatis personæ is not that of some airy vision which lights upon our path, and after surprising and dazzling us for a moment, straightway vanishes and is seen no more, but of one of the veritable actors in almost every place and every scene.

The sacred volume opens, as we have already seen, with Eve in Paradise, all beauty, innocence and smiles, as its lovely frontispiece; and then shows us that same Eve, impelled by the vanity which she has bequeathed as a mournful legacy to her daughters, reaching forth her hand, at the instigation of the tempter, to pluck that fruit which was the test of her obedience, and the seed of all our woe, and thus exhibiting to us the sad association of beauty with sin. In tracing woman's history, as it is set forth on the page of Scripture, from Paradise as the starting point, we will look first at the darker side of the narrative. How soon do we see Adah and Zillah, consenting to be the joint wives of Lamech, and thus giving, for aught we can tell, the original pattern of that bane of domestic happiness, polygamy! Then come the "daughters of men," the women in the line of Cain, who made no profession of religion, but lived in atheism, seducing and corrupting the "sons of God," the male line of Seth and the professors of godliness, and thus by their unsuitable and incongruous marriages and the universal corruption that followed, creating the necessity for the waters of the deluge to wash away the moral filth of the old world. Hagar comes next, troubling the faith, charity and peace of Abraham; persecuting the child of promise; and at the same time punishing by her waywardness the weakness of the patriarch, whose concubine she was. Then

that family of Lot, the poor, earthly-minded mother, that was so wedded to Sodom as to cast the lingering, longing look behind, which transformed her into a pillar of salt; and the disgusting conduct of her incestuous daughters, who shewed too well how they had been corrupted by the place of their abode, and how careful all parents should be to remove their children from the polluting influence of evil examples. What a revolting pattern of an adulterous woman, and of a cruel slanderer to hide her shame, is Potiphar's wife! Then there was the ensnaring and successful temptation offered by the daughters of Moab to the children of Israel in the wilderness. How mighty and how fatal were the powers of harlotry in Delilah to subdue the strength and extort the secrets of Sampson; and what a forcible picture of man's weakness before woman's vicious wiles, have they furnished to all coming ages! Who does not think of Bathsheba consenting to David's wicked proposals, and thus causing him for awhile to cease to be David? And then come the strange women that threw even the mighty intellect of Solomon into the awful eclipse of idolatry: Jezebel, that Zidonian idolatress, who instigated her husband to the murder of Naboth, and exasperated the mind of Ahab to a more intense degree of wickedness than he would otherwise have attained to: and Athaliah, that turbulent and idolatrous queen-mother, who counselled her son to do wickedly, and was put to death by command of Jehoiada the priest.*

* I have forborne, of course, to dwell on the examples and descriptions of female delinquency recorded in the Scriptures. It has been a matter of surprise, perhaps almost of regret, to some, that such instances of depravity should have been left on record. But shall we dispute either the wisdom, goodness, or purity of God in these histories? Are not important ends to be answered by them in the

Coming forward to the New Testament, we meet with Herodias, exhibiting the malignant and revengeful passions of a shameless woman, against the servant of God, who had dared to reprove her paramour, and impelling Herod, against the protest of his judgment, heart, and conscience, to put John the Baptist to death, and so involve them both in murder. And here also we

moral government of God, and in the religious history of man? A profligate woman is at once the most odious, mischievous, and hateful member of the community. Is it not every way proper, and even desirable, that such a character should be held up to detestation and scorn, as a warning to her sex: and that God should thus set a brand upon her with his own hand, and bear his indignant testimony against her vices? The examples of this kind are all for our warning, to show in instances from actual life the excessive odiousness of female depravity. This is done in a manner the least likely to do harm, and the most likely to do good. The descriptions of female turpitude in the word of God contain nothing to inflame the imagination, or to stimulate the passions; nothing to make vice seductive, by a half-concealment of its odiousness; nothing to beat down the guards of virtue, by associating sin with an amiable or interesting character, or screening it by sophistical and insidious excuses or defences. Vice is left in all its naked and revolting deformity, all its nauseating loathsomeness, to inspire disgust, and cause even ordinary virtue to recoil from the ugly and filthy object. How different the case with many works of fiction, both prosaic and poetic, in which, though there may be a less particularity of sinful detail, there is immeasurably more to corrupt the moral principles, to pollute the heart, and to lead astray the youthful mind from the paths of virtue! What female reader of the word of God can rise from contemplating even the worst characters, and perusing the most vivid descriptions of the sins of her sex, without a stronger love of purity, and a more deeply rooted hatred of iniquity? This is the answer we would give to infidels, who sometimes affect to be prudish, and complain of the descriptions and examples of female criminality which are contained in the sacred volume. The use which every virtuous woman will make of them, is to be inspired with a greater abhorrence of transgression, and a more holy and intense desire to be kept from the most distant approach to it.

read of the Jewish women that encouraged and stimulated to violence the mob that persecuted Paul and Barnabas: and "That woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and taught and seduced God's servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

In such instances as these, female pride, wherever it exists, may find some check to its exercise, and some motive to humility. To those females who are prone to think of their sex more highly than they ought, we present these examples of woman's frailty, which the pen of inspiration has drawn upon the page of Scripture. While to those of the other sex, if there are any, who are apt to glory over fallen women, we would, after reminding them that some of these instances are the result of their own seductions, present the brighter side of the picture. We would also call upon women to contemplate for their own encouragement the beautiful specimens of female excellence, with which, like so many stars of various magnitudes, the firmament of Scripture is studded.

There is Sarah, who, notwithstanding her many failings, was unquestionably a good and even a great woman. In her case, as in many others, her beauty became a snare to others, if not dangerous to her own virtue, and placed the life of her husband in peril. Still she is presented by the apostle Peter as one of the holy women of old, who were patterns of domestic virtue and piety. For her defects, which consisted of a weakness of faith, leading to some strange domestic arrangements that brought their own punishment, were surrounded with the brightness of many excellences, in which, if they were not entirely lost, they were at any

rate diminished. She was a pattern of conjugal fidelity, sweet simplicity, and a just matronly jealousy towards the stranger who had been brought for awhile so unwisely into her place. Her faith in God's promise was strong, though shaken for a moment by the improbabilities of the promised blessing.

Rebekah's earlier and latter life presents to us a somewhat painful contrast. None can read the beautiful account of the mission of Abraham's servant to her father without admiration of the good qualities of the damsel who is the heroine of the story, her industrious habits, her unaffected and artless simplicity, her genuine yet not silly modesty, her graceful courtesy, her humane consideration of the comfort of the brute creation. What a bright pattern is here for the imitation of young people. But oh! her unbelieving, injudicious, and sinful contrivances to bring about the bestowment of the Divine blessing upon the heir of promise, by the wicked imposition which she practised upon her aged and blind husband! Mothers, read it, and learn to guard against sinful contrivances to get good for your children. Rebekah, however, was a good, though a mistaken woman.

In Miriam, the watchful sentinel beside the waters of the Nile, of the ark which contained the infant Moses, we see first the dutiful daughter and anxious sister; and, in after life, the coadjutor of her illustrious brother, leading the chorus of women by her timbrel and her voice, in his triumphal song, on the borders of the Red Sea: afterwards, in conjunction with Aaron, she became his opponent through envy: but we may hope was restored to her better and earlier mind,

through the chastisement she received from the Lord. How much mischief may envy do to spoil the best of characters, and to poison the happiness of families!

In Deborah, we contemplate the religious heroine, and the inspired poetess, raised up by the special Providence of God, for the deliverance of his people; an instance of exalted piety in an age of depressed religion, and still deeper national distress.

Should it be asked by any one, what we are to say of Jael, celebrated by the poetess Deborah, in her lofty strain of praise, I scarcely know what answer to give. Nothing less than a Divine mandate, which she may have received in some unknown and unrecorded manner, could have justified the deed. Apart from this, even the stratagems of war would not clear the heroine from the charge of treachery of the blackest kind. True, Sisera was an enemy; but he had trusted himself to her protection, and she slew him while sleeping under her guardianship. I leave the matter therefore as I find it, without either justifying or condemning it, for I know not all the facts of the case.

What a pattern of filial obedience, piety, and patriotism, have we in Jephtha's daughter, over whose affecting story hangs so deep a mystery. Whether, according to the opinions of some, she was actually offered up in sacrifice; or according to others, was only consecrated by perpetual virginity to God, her beautiful character shines out with equal brightness, in all that is amiable, dutiful, and submissive.

But now turn to that touching and melancholy group of widows in the land of Moab, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah. What pen but that which has done it, and

done it with such inimitable simplicity, could do justice to this sweet and pathetic story? Rarely in the history of families does such a scene of affliction as this occur, a widowed mother, and the widows of her two sons! A sad proof how precarious are all the scenes of dear domestic bliss we fondly call our own. How tender, how dignified, and how thoughtful, is the conduct of Naomi! What nobleness of resolution, what daughter-like attachment, and what piety, do we see in Ruth! If in her after-conduct there was that which would not suit the meridian of our age and country, there was nothing contrary to the strictest purity of intention, or modesty of conduct, if we take into account the circumstances of her time, and the provisions of the Jewish law under which she lived. The whole narrative presents a beautiful episode in Jewish history, and an attractive specimen of the simplicity of early manners.

Can we fail to sympathise with Hannah in her sorrows, her insults, and her joys, or to admire her zeal for the Lord, in devoting her child of promise to his service? What a pattern for parents willingly to give up their sons for ministers and missionaries! Abigail furnishes us with a striking example of the singular prudence of a woman who was unhappily associated with a drunkard and a churl, and of her diligence and tact in averting from her family the evils impending over it from her husband's vices.

What an instance of respect, gratitude, and affection for the ministers of religion, of female influence, rightly exerted over the mind of her husband in the cause of religion, and of submission to the will of God, is the Shunamite! Who can read that touching account of the death of her only son, and her own collected, composed,

and energetic conduct on the occasion, without deep feeling and high admiration? We find in her no overwhelming or distracting grief preventing her from adopting the best, the only means for obtaining relief, but a faith which sustained her courage, and directed all her actions. Multitudes in every age and country, where the story has gone, have been instructed by her language, and stimulated by her example; and amidst their deepest sorrows, have echoed her few noble monosyllables in reply to the question, "Is it well with thee? With thy husband? With thy child? And she answered and said, It is well."

And then what a pattern of fidelity, and piety, and kindness, do we find for female servants in the very next chapter, in the simple and beautiful story of the little Hebrew captive girl, who was nurse-maid in Naaman's family! All, and especially those who occupy a similar situation, may learn, by what weak and humble instruments God may accomplish his purposes, and work out the schemes of his Providence. To how many a charity sermon in these remote days has that incident furnished a text; and thus the little Jewish slave not only brought healing to her master, and a knowledge of the true God into Syria, but became a pattern to myriads of children in our own country!

Nor less to be admired are the generosity and faith of the widow of Sarepta, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil stand out in such relief, among the brightest pictures of Old Testament history. In what a coruscation of glory does the name of Esther blaze forth upon us, for conjugal fidelity, piety uncorrupted by prosperity, and queenly influence consecrated to the cause of true religion!

Now open the page of the New Testament. Is Christianity destitute of female worthies, women of holy renown? It would be very strange if it were. Strange, indeed, if His religion, who, though he was the Son of God, was born of woman, did not raise up many who should shine forth in all the mild and heavenly radiance of female piety.

Though, as I have said in the last chapter, we ascribe no divine honours and offer no idolatrous homage to the Virgin Mary, nor set her forth in the beauties of painting and sculpture; nor call her, with a singular mixture of absurdity and blasphemy the Mother of God; we revere her as blessed and exalted among women, to give birth to the humanity of Christ, the Saviour of the world; and ascribe to her every holy and general excellence as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a saint.* We cherish also a high veneration for Elizabeth her cousin, the wife of Zacharias, and the mother of John the Bap-

* In an age when Popery is lifting up its head in triumph, and with hope, no fair opportunity should be lost to expose its pretensions and refute its errors. There is no part of this dreadful system more contrary to Scripture, or more insulting to God, than its Mariolatry, or worship of the Virgin Mary. She is styled "Mother of God:" "Queen of Seraphim, Saints, and Prophets:" "Advocate of Sinners:" "Refuge of Sinners:" "Gate of Heaven:" "Queen of Heaven." And as the same titles are ascribed to her, or nearly so, as are ascribed to Christ; so is the same worship paid to her as to the Saviour. Churches are built to her honour; her shrines are crowded with devotees, enriched with their gifts, and adorned with their votive offerings. Prayers are offered to her, her praises are chanted in hymns, thanksgivings are addressed to her, and blessings are asked from her, as one who has power to bestow them. Seven annual festivals celebrate her greatness, and keep alive the devotion of her worshippers. So that Papists almost shut out the worship due to the Father and the Saviour by their idolatry of her. Now where, we ask, is one single example,

tist. In the piety of old Anna, we see a bright pattern for aged widows in her posture, believing and waiting for the consolation of Israel, and an example for an aged saint, ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: the zeal, so worthy to be imitated by every reclaimed sinner, of the woman of Samaria, after she had believed in Christ, for his honour, and the conversion of her countrymen: the melting penitence of the woman who had been a sinner, whose history teaches us that the most abandoned persons may be reclaimed, and find mercy, and that penitence, gratitude, and love, should be in proportion to the guilt contracted and forgiven: the invincible faith of the Syrophenician woman, which received such admiration from Christ, and will teach the latest generations of mankind the power of importunate, persevering, and believing prayer: the generosity of the poor widow who cast in two mites, the whole of her substance, into the treasury of the temple:

command, or even hint, for all this, in the Word of God? Is it any wonder the Scriptures are kept from the people, when the most common understanding could see that nothing of all this is to be found in that volume? The Acts of the Apostles make mention of her name but once, and that without any mark of eulogy; and in the Epistles she is not mentioned at all. Yes, how contrary is all this to the declation that there is only one Mediator between God and man, the Man Jesus Christ. "This doctrine of the worship due to the Virgin," says Wylie, in his admirable work on the Papacy, "has been exhibited in symbol, and that in so grotesque a way that for a moment we forget its blasphemy. In the dream of St. Bernard, which forms the subject of an altar-piece at Milan, two ladders were seen reaching from earth to heaven. At the top of one of the ladders stood Christ, and at the top of the other stood Mary. Of those who attempted to enter heaven by the ladder of Christ, not one succeeded, all fell back. Of those who ascended by the ladder of Mary, not one failed. The Virgin prompt to succour, stretched out her hand; and thus aided, the aspirants ascended with ease."

the beautiful account of the two sisters, Martha and Mary, and the delineation in it, of the characters of the careful and troubled housewife, and the anxious inquirer after salvation: the pouring out of the box of spikenard by one that loved Christ so much as to give her costliest offerings to his person: the grateful, devoted attention and ministrations of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to Christ. What an array of female excellence is here!

Passing on to the Acts of the Apostles, what delightful mention is made of Dorcas, full of good works and alms-deeds which she did, as evinced by her coats and garments for the poor, and the tears which were produced by her death, and which embalmed her memory: and of Lydia, who resorted to the place of prayer at Philippi, whose heart the Lord had opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul, and who afforded the rites of hospitality to the apostle and his companion: and of the chief women, not a few, at Thessalonica, who believed in the apostle's doctrine concerning Christ. Nor are the epistles barren of female names deserving ever to be held in remembrance for their piety, zeal, and good works. There we find Phebe, the deaconess and bearer to Rome of the epistle to the church in that city; and Euodia, and Syntyche; Lois and Eunice, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, renowned for the unfeigned faith which dwelt in them; and those women also that laboured with Paul in the gospel. And what shall we say more of Priscilla, Paul's helper in Christ, and the instructress of the eloquent Apollos; and Mary, "who bestowed much labour upon him:" and Tryphena, and Tryphosa, and Julia, "who laboured in the Lord?"

No, my female friends, you see, we repeat, the Scrip-

tures of truth have not passed over your sex in silence, nor thrust it into a corner, nor thrown it into the shade. On the contrary, the sacred page is rich and luminous with bright and beautiful examples of female excellence. You stand there side by side with man in the practice of piety, and are exhibited as not a whit behind him in all that appertains to the glory of humanity. In the Bible, we have now proved that woman is seen in every gradation of rank, from the queen upon the throne, to the menial grinding at the mill: in every variety of condition, the maid, the wife, the mother, and the mistress; in every circumstance of grief and joy, the happy bride, the mourning widow: in every phase of moral character, the faithful spouse and the shameless adultress: in every scene of active duty, whether in the family, the church, or the world: in every changeful aspect of fortune, rolling in affluence or pining in want: there she is seen enlivening the sacred page with her narrative, adorning it with her beauty: sometimes darkening it with her crimes, at others brightening it with her virtues: now calling us to weep with her in her sorrows, then to rejoice with her in her joys. In short, woman is everywhere to be found wrought into the details of God's Scriptures, a beacon to warn us, or a lamp to guide us. And all the notices being written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are to be considered as his testimony to the excellence and importance of your sex, and the influence it is intended and destined to exert upon the welfare of mankind. Had the Bible, I will not say been against you, but had it passed you over in silence, or only referred to you incidentally, or looked at you with sidelong glances, you would have sunk in general estimation; and man's neglect of you would have been defended or

excused by that of God himself. But now no one can plead the example of the Bible for any attempt to neglect, despise, or oppress you. While it protects woman from the insults, the injuries, and the oppression of the other sex, it saves her with no less care and benefit from the sad effects which would arise from the assumption of prerogatives which do not belong to her, and from those excesses of ambition to which her own vanity might otherwise prompt her. It guards her dignity from being trampled down by others, and equally prevents her from lowering it herself, by pretensions which would only make her ridiculous. It describes with accuracy the circle within which it is the will of Providence she should move; presents to her the mission which she is sent into the world to fulfil; furnishes her the rules by which she is to act; proposes to her the rewards which she may legitimately seek and surely expect, if she be faithful to herself: and offers her the assistance necessary for the fulfilment of her high and holy vocation. What this is will be the subject of our next chapter.

In the meanwhile, let me exhort you not only to study the Scriptures, to learn the way of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, but to study them, in order to form your own character as women, by their precepts and their examples. Many and precious are the volumes that have been written for your benefit by your own sex. Female pens have been most happily and usefully employed in delineating female excellence, in writings which you would do well to read. But after all, there is no guide for the formation of female character, morally or religiously considered, like the inspired one. A woman unacquainted with the Bible, and igno-

rant of its contents, as affecting her own conduct, character, and history, has yet to know the finest patterns of female loveliness. The Bible is the best mirror by which most accurately to know what you are, and to become what you should be; before which you may adjust all the moral habiliments of the soul, and from which you may go forth adorned with all the beauties of holiness, clothed with the garment of purity, and decorated with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*

* The author is indebted for some things in this chapter and the next to an incomparably beautiful little work by Adolphe Monod, formerly professor of Theology at Montauban, but now Minister of the French Reformed Church in Paris. A preacher so celebrated, that when Lacordaire, the most renowned of Roman Catholic public orators, was complimented upon being the first French preacher in France, he replied, "No: I am the second; Adolphe Monod is first."

CHAPTER III.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

GENESIS ii, 18.

And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

"WHAT, in the great, and diversified, and busy world, is my place and my business?" is a question which every one should ask. For every one has a place to fill, and a part to act. And to act his part well, according to the will of God, in the lofty drama of human life, should be the ambition, solicitude, and prayer of each of us. It is the first lesson of wisdom, to know our place; the second, to keep it. And of course, corresponding with this, to ascertain the duties of our place and to discharge them. There are class duties as well as individual ones, and the latter are generally to be more accurately learnt by an intelligent apprehension of the former. Woman, as such, has her mission. What is it? What is precisely the rank she is to occupy, what the purpose she is to fulfil, above which she would be unduly exalted, and below which she would be unjustly degraded? This is a subject which should be thoroughly understood, in order that she may know what to claim, and man

what to concede; that she may know what she has to do, and he what he has a right to expect.

I shall endeavour to answer this question, and point out the nature of woman's mission. In doing this, I shall consult the infallible oracle of Scripture, and not the speculations of moralists, economists, and philosophers. I hold this to be our rule in the matter before us. God is the Creator of both sexes, the constructor of society, the author of social relations, and the arbiter of social duties, claims, and immunities. And this is admitted by all who believe in the authority of the Bible. You are content, my female friends, to abide by the decisions of this oracle. You have every reason to be so. He that created you is best qualified to declare the intention of his own acts, and you may safely, as you should humbly, allow him to fix your position, and make known your duties. In common with man, woman has a heavenly calling to glorify God as the end of her existence, and to perform all the duties and enjoy all the blessings of a religious life; like him, she is a sinful, rational, and immortal creature, placed under an economy of mercy, and called, by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life. Religion is as much her vocation as that of the other sex. In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are on a level as to obligations, duties, and privileges.

In common with man, she is called, where she is unmarried and dependent, to labour for her own support; a condition to which large portions of the community are necessarily subject by the circumstances of their birth. Industry is as incumbent upon her as upon the other sex, and indolence is as inexcusable in her as in man.

But in the married state, her sphere of labour, as we shall presently show, is her family: and it belongs to the husband to earn by the sweat of his brow, not only his own bread, but that of the household. In many of the uncivilised tribes, where the ameliorating condition of Christianity is not felt, the wife is the drudge of the family, while the husband lives in lordly sloth; and even in this country, at least in its manufacturing portions, manual labour falls too often, and too heavily upon married women, greatly to the detriment of their families. An unmarried woman, however, without fortune, must provide for herself in some way or other, according to the circumstances of her birth and situation; and let her not consider herself degraded by it. Honest industry is far more honourable than pride and sloth.

But neither of these is the peculiar mission of woman, as appertaining to her sex. To know what this is, we must, as I have said, consult the page of revelation, and ascertain the declared motive of God for her creation. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." This is further expressed, or rather repeated, where it is said, "And Adam," or "Although Adam, had given names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; yet for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." Nothing can be more clear from this, than that woman was made for man. Adam was created a being with undeveloped social propensities, which indeed seem essential to all creatures. It is the sublime peculiarity of Deity to be entirely independent for happiness of all other beings. He, and He only, is the theatre of his own glory, the fountain

of his own felicity, and a sufficient object of his own contemplation, needing nothing for his bliss but self-communion. An archangel alone in heaven would pine, even there, for some companionship, either divine or angelic. Adam, surrounded by all the glories of Paradise, and by all the various tribes it contained, found himself alone, and needed companionship. Without it his life was but a solitude, Eden itself a desert. Endowed with a nature too communicative to be satisfied from himself alone, he sighed for society, for support, for some complement to his existence, and only half-lived so long as he lived alone. Formed to think, to speak, to love, his thoughts yearned for other thoughts with which to compare and exercise his soaring aspirations. His words were wearisomely wasted upon the wanton air, or at best awoke but an echo which mocked instead of answering him. His love, as regards an earthly object, knew not where to bestow itself; and returning to his own bosom, threatened to degenerate into a desolating egotism. His entire being longed, in short, for another self, but that other self did not exist; there was no help meet for him. The visible creatures which surrounded him, were too much beneath him: the invisible Being who gave him life was too much above him, to unite their condition with his own. Whereupon God made woman, and the great problem was immediately solved.

It was, then, the characteristic of unfallen man to want some one to sympathise with him in his joys, as it is of fallen man to want some one to sympathise with him in his sorrows. Whether Adam was so far conscious of his wants as to ask for a companion, we are not informed. It would appear from the inspired record, as

if the design of this precious boon originated with God; and as if Eve, like so many of his other mercies, was the spontaneous bestowment of his own free-will. Thus Adam would have to say, as did one of his most illustrious descendants many ages afterwards, "Thou preventest me with thy goodness." Here, then, is the design of God in creating woman, to be a suitable help-mate to man. Man needed a companion, and God gave him woman. And as there was no other man than Adam at that time in existence, Eve was designed exclusively for Adam's comfort; thus, teaching us from the beginning, that whatever mission woman may have to accomplish in reference to man, in a generic sense, her mission, at least in wedded life, is to be a suitable help-mate for that one man to whom she is united. It was declared from the beginning, that every other tie, though not severed by marriage, shall be rendered subordinate, and a man shall "leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." If then, woman's mission in Paradise was to be man's companion and joy, such must be the case still. Her vocation has not been changed by the fall. By that catastrophe, man needs still more urgently a companion, and God has rendered this, her mission, still more explicit by the declaration, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." It has been often shewn that by being taken from himself, she was equal to man in nature; while the very part of the body from which she was abstracted indicated the position she was intended to occupy. She was not taken from the head, to show she was not to rule over him; nor from his foot, to teach that she was not to be his slave; nor from his hand, to show that she was not to

be his tool; but from his side, to show that she was to be his companion. There may perhaps be more of ingenuity and fancy in this, than of God's original design; but if a mere conceit, it is at once both pardonable and instructive.

That woman was intended to occupy a position of subordination and dependence, is clear from every part of the Word of God. This is declared in language already quoted, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and He shall rule over thee." This referred not only to Eve personally, but to Eve representatively. It was the Divine law of the relation of the sexes, then promulgated for all time. The preceding language placed woman as a punishment for her sin, in a state of sorrow; this places her in a state of subjection. Her husband was to be the centre of her earthly desires, and to a certain extent, the regulator of them also: and she was to be in subjection to him. What was enacted in Paradise, has been confirmed by every subsequent dispensation of grace. Judaism is full of it, in all its provisions. And Christianity equally establishes it.

I shall here introduce and explain the words of the apostle, "I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man." He then goes on to direct that women should not, unveiled and with their hair cut off, exercise the miraculous gifts which were sometimes bestowed upon them; and adds, "A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." For the explanation of this passage, I remark, that in the times of the apostles there were two

recognised characteristic emblems of the female sex, when they appeared in public, veils, and the preservation of their tresses. It would seem from the apostle's remarks, as if some of the female members of the Corinthian Church, during the time that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was upon them, cast off their veils, after the manner of the heathen priestesses when they delivered the responses of the oracles. This conduct the apostle reproves, and informs them that if the veil were thrown aside, they might as well also cut off their flowing hair, which is one of woman's distinctions from man, and is by all nations considered the ornament, as well as the peculiarity of the sex. We may pause for a moment, to observe how constantly and completely Christianity is the parent of order, and the enemy of indecorum of every kind. Why were not the women to lay aside their veils? Because it would be forgetting their subordination and dependence, and assuming an equal rank with man. This is the gist of the apostle's reason. It was not merely indecorous, and contrary to modesty, but it was ambitious, and violating the order of heaven. The other expressions of the apostle in this passage are very strong. As Christ is the head, or ruler of man, so man is the head and ruler of woman, in the domestic economy. Man was made to show forth God's glory and praise; to be in subordination to him, and only to him; while woman was created to be, in addition to this, the glory of man, by being in subordination to him, as his help and his ornament. She was not only made out of him, but for him. All her loveliness, comeliness, and purity, are not only the expressions of her excellence, but of his honour and dignity, since all were not only derived from him, but made for him.

This then is woman's true position, and if anything more need be said to prove it from the records of Christianity, we may refer to apostolic language in other places, where wives are enjoined to be subject to their husbands in all things, even as the church is subject to Christ. Nor is the apostle Paul alone in this, for Peter writes in the same strain. Let woman then bow to this authority, nor feel herself degraded by such submission. It has been said, that in domestic life, man shines as the sun, but woman as the moon, with a splendour borrowed from the man. May it not be said with greater truth and propriety, and less invidiously, that man shines as the primary planet, reflecting the glory of God, who is the centre of the moral universe; and woman while she equally derives her splendour from the central luminary and is governed by his attraction, is yet the satellite of man, revolves around him, follows him in his course, and ministers to him.

Behold, then, we say again, woman's position and mission: it is summed up in love and subjection to her husband. "Everything connected with the relationship of man and woman has, however, since the fall, a more serious character; her love has become more anxious; her humility more profound. Bashful of her own defects, and anxious to reinstate herself in her husband's heart, woman lives to repair the wrong she has inflicted on man, and lavishes upon him consolations which may sweeten the present bitterness of sin, and warnings which may preserve from the future bitterness of hell."

Woman, then, whatever relation she may bear to society at large, whatever duties, in consequence of this relation, she may have to discharge, and whatever benefits, by the right discharge of these duties she may

have it in her power to confer upon the community, must consider herself chiefly called to advance the comfort of man in his private relations; by promoting his peace, to promote her own; and to receive from him all that respect, protection, and ever assiduous affection, to which her equal nature, her companionship, and her devotedness, give her so just a claim. She is, in wedded life, to be his constant companion, in whose society he is to find one, who meets him hand to hand, eye to eye, lip to lip, and heart to heart: to whom he can unburthen the secrets of a heart pressed down with care, or wrung with anguish; whose presence shall be to him instead of all society; whose voice shall be his sweetest music; whose smiles his brightest sunshine: from whom he shall go forth with regret, and to whose converse he shall return with willing feet, when the toils of the day are over; who shall walk near his loving heart, and feel the throbbing of affection as her arm leans on his, and presses on his side. In his hours of retired converse, he shall tell her all the secrets of his heart; find in her all the capabilities, and all the promptings, of the most tender and endeared fellowship; and in her gentle smiles, and unrestrained speech, enjoy all to be expected in one who was given by God to be his associate and friend.

In that companionship which woman was designed to afford to man, must of course be included the sympathetic offices of the comforter. It is hers, in their hours of retirement, to console and cheer him; when he is injured or insulted, to heal the wounds of his troubled spirit: when burdened by care, to lighten his load by sharing it; when groaning with anguish, to calm by her

peace-speaking words the tumult of his heart; and act, in all his sorrows, the part of a ministering angel.

Nor should she be backward to offer, nor he backward to receive, the counsels of wisdom, which her prudence will suggest, even though she may not be intimately acquainted with all the entanglements of this world's business. Woman's advice, had it been asked and acted upon, would have saved thousands of men from bankruptcy and ruin. Few men have ever had to regret their taking counsel from a prudent wife; while multitudes have had to reproach themselves for their folly in not asking, and multitudes more for not following, the counsels of such a companion.

If, then, this is woman's mission according to the representation of her Almighty Creator, to be the suitable help-mate of that man, to whom she has given herself as the companion of his pilgrimage upon earth, it of course supposes that marriage, contracted with a due regard to prudence, and under all proper regulations, is the natural state of both man and woman. And so, I affirm, in truth it is. Providence has willed it, and nature prompts it. But as the exceptions are so numerous, is there no mission for those to whom the exception appertains? Is it married women only that have a mission, and an important one? Certainly not. In these cases, I fall back upon woman's mission to society at large. And is not this momentous? Has it not been admitted in all ages, and by all countries, that the influence of female character upon social virtue and happiness, and upon national strength and prosperity, is prodigious, whether for good or for evil? Is not the declaration with which Adolphe Monod opens his beau-

tiful treatise, perfectly true? "The greatest influence on earth whether for good or for evil, is possessed by woman. Let us study the history of by-gone ages, the state of barbarism and civilisation; of the east and the west; of Paganism and Christianity; of antiquity and the middle ages; of the mediæval and modern times; and we shall find that there is nothing which more decidedly separates them than the condition of woman." Every woman, whether rich or poor, married or single, has a circle of influence, within which, according to her character, she is exerting a certain amount of power for good or harm. Every woman, by her virtue or her vice: by her folly or her wisdom; by her levity or her dignity, is adding something to our national elevation or degradation. As long as female virtue is prevalent, upheld by one sex, and respected by the other, a nation cannot sink very low in the scale of ignominy, by plunging into the depths of vice. To a certain extent, woman is the conservator of her nation's welfare. Her virtue, if firm and uncorrupted, will stand sentinel over that of the empire. Law, justice, liberty, and the arts, all contribute of course, to the well-being of a nation; beneficial influence flows in from various springs: and innumerable contributors may be at work, each labouring in his vocation for his country's weal, but let the general tone of female morals be low, and all will be rendered nugatory: while the universal prevalence of womanly intelligence and virtue will swell the stream of civilisation to its highest level, impregnate it with its richest qualities, and spread its fertility over the widest surface. A community is not likely to be overthrown where woman fulfils her mission; for by the power of her noble heart over the hearts of others, she will raise it from its ruins,

and restore it again to prosperity and joy. Here, then, beyond the circle of wedded life, as well as within it, is no doubt part of woman's mission, and an important one it is. Her field is social life, her object is social happiness, her reward is social gratitude and respect.

"If any female," says Mr Upham, in his life of Madame Guyon, "should think these pages worthy of her perusal, let her gather the lesson from these statements, that woman's influence does not terminate, as is sometimes supposed, with the moulding and the guidance of the minds of children; her task is not finished when she sends abroad those whom she has borne and nurtured in her bosom, on their pilgrimage of action and duty in this wide world. Far from it. Man is neither safe in himself, nor profitable to others, when he lives dissociated from that benign influence which is to be found in woman's presence and character; an influence which is needed in the projects and toils of mature life, in the temptations and trials to which that period is especially exposed, and in the weakness and sufferings of age, hardly less than in childhood and youth.

"But it is not woman, gay, frivolous, and unbelieving, or woman separated from those divine teachings which make all hearts wise, that can lay claim to the exercise of such an influence. But when she adds to the traits of sympathy, forbearance, and warm affection, which characterise her, the strength and wisdom of a well-cultivated intellect, and the still higher attributes of religious faith and holy love, it is not easy to limit the good she may do in all situations, and in all periods of life."

If I am right as to the nature of woman's mission, I

cannot err as to the proper sphere of it. If she was created for man, and not only for the race of man, but for one man, then the easy and necessary inference is, that home is the proper scene of woman's action and influence. There are few terms in the language around which cluster so many blissful associations as that delight of every English heart, the word home. The elysium of love, the nursery of virtue, the garden of enjoyment, the temple of concord, the circle of all tender relationships, the playground of childhood, the dwelling of manhood, the retreat of age; where health loves to enjoy its pleasures, wealth to revel in its luxuries, and poverty bears its rigours; where best sickness can endure its pains, and dissolving nature expire: which throws its spell over those who are within its charmed circle, and even sends its attractions across oceans and continents, drawing to itself the thoughts and wishes of the man that wanders from it to the antipodes: this, home, sweet home, is the sphere of wedded woman's mission. Is it any hardship upon woman, any depreciation of her importance, to place her sphere of action and influence there? Is it to assign her a circle of influence unworthy of herself, to call her to preside over that little community, of which home is the seat? Shall we estimate the importance of such a scene of action? Shall we tell of the varied and momentous interests which are included in that circle? Shall we speak of the happiness of a husband, whose bliss, to so considerable an extent, is created by herself, and involves her own; or the character and future well-being for both worlds of children, if she have them? or the comfort of servants, and the order and pleasant working of the whole domestic constitution,

all which depend so much upon her? Why to make one such home a seat of holiness and happiness; to fill one such sphere with an influence so sweet and sacred; to throw the fascination of connubial feeling and of maternal influence over one such community; to irradiate so many countenances with delight; to fill so many hearts with content, and to prepare so many characters for their future part in life; such an object would be deemed by an angel worth an incarnation upon earth.

Or from this sense of her duties, shall we look abroad upon the public good, the strength and stability of the nation? Who knows not the springs of an empire's prosperity lie in the domestic constitution, and in well trained families? Even one such family is a contribution to the majestic flow of a nation's greatness. Can such families exist without a woman's care, and oversight, and wisdom? Has it not grown into a proverb, that home has ever been the nursery of great men, and their mothers their instructresses? It may be said as a general principle, that woman is not only the mother of the body, but of the character, of her children. To her is first entrusted the instruction of the mind, the cultivation of the heart, the formation of the life. Thought, feeling, will, imagination, virtue, religion, or the contrary moral tendencies, all germinate under her fostering influence. "The greatest power in the moral world is that which a mother exercises over her young child." The decisive moment in education is the starting point. The dominant direction which is to determine the whole course of life, lies concealed in the first years of infancy; and these belong to the mother.

One of the most hallowed, lovely, and beautiful

sights in our world is, a woman at home discharging in all the meekness of wisdom, the various duties of wife, mother, and mistress, with an order that nothing is allowed to disturb; a patience which nothing can exhaust; an affection which is never ruffled; and a perseverance that no difficulties can interrupt, nor any disappointments arrest: in short, such a scene as that described by the writer of the most exquisite chapter of the Proverbs. Eve in Paradise, in all her untainted loveliness, by the side of Adam, propping the lily, training the vine, or directing the growth of the rose; shedding upon him, and receiving, reflected back from his noble countenance upon her happy spirit, such smiles as told in silent language, their perfect and conjoint bliss, was no doubt, a brighter image of perfect virtue and undisturbed felicity; but to me, a woman in our fallen world, guiding in piety, intelligence, and all matronly and motherly excellences, the circle of a home made happy chiefly by her influence, presents a scene little inferior in beauty, and far superior as a display of virtue and intelligence, to that of which our first mother was the centre even in her original perfections. And it is fancy, and not reason and moral taste, that can revel in the mind's pictures of Eve in Paradise, and not feel warmer admiration in the actual presence of such a woman as I have described.

But it will, perhaps, be asked, whether I would shut up every married woman within the domestic circle, and, with the jealousy and authority of an oriental despot, confine her to her own home; or whether I would condemn and degrade her to mere household drudgery. I have, I think, protected my-

self already from this imputation, by representing her as the companion, counsellor, and comforter of man. She shall, with my consent, never sink from the side of man, to be trampled under his feet. She shall not have one ray of her glory extinguished, nor be deprived of a single honour that belongs to her sex; but to be the instructress of her children, the companion of her husband, and the queen consort of the domestic state, is no degradation; and she only is degraded who thinks so. Still in connection with, though not in neglect of, this, let her give her influence upon society to the circle of her friends on all suitable occasions, and in all suitable places. Though the drawing-room is not the chief sphere of her influence, it is one of the circles in which she may move; and albeit incessant parties of pleasure, and a constant round of entertainments, are not her mission, but oppose and hinder it; yet she is occasionally to bestow that influence, which every wise and good woman exerts over the tone of morals and manners, on the friends who may court her society. Woman is the grace, ornament, and charm of the social circle; and when she carries into it habits that frown upon vice, that check folly and discountenance levity, she is a benefactress to the country. And as to the various institutions of our age for the relief of suffering humanity, the instruction of ignorance, and the spread of religion, we give her all the room and liberty for these things which are compatible with her duties to her own household. What prudent female would ask more, or what advocate of her rights would claim more? Woman is always in her place where charity presides, except when her time and attention are demanded at home, for

those who are more immediately her charge. But I shall have much more to urge on this subject in a future chapter.

But what shall I say of those women who claim on their own behalf, or of their advocates who claim for them, a participation in the labours, occupations, rights, and duties, which have usually been considered as exclusively appertaining to men? There are those who would expunge the line of demarcation, which nearly all nations have drawn, between the duties and the occupations of men and those of women. Christianity has provided a place for woman for which she is fitted, and in which she shines; but take her out of that place, and her lustre pales and sheds a feeble and sickly ray. Or to change the metaphor, woman is a plant, which in its own greenhouse seclusion will put forth all its brilliant colours and all its sweet perfume; but remove it from the protection of its own floral home into the common garden and open field, where hardier flowers will grow and thrive, its beauty fades and its odour is diminished. Neither reason nor Christianity invites woman to the professor's chair, or conducts her to the bar, or makes her welcome to the pulpit, or admits her to the place of ordinary magistracy. Both exclude her, not indeed by positive and specific commands, but by general principles and spirit, alike from the violence and license of the camp, the debates of the senate, and the pleadings of the forum. And they bid her beware how she lays aside the delicacy of her sex, and listens to any doctrines which claim new rights for her, and becomes the dupe of those who have put themselves forward as her advocates only to gain notoriety, or perhaps bread. They forbid us to hear her gentle voice in the popular

assembly; and do not even suffer her to speak in the Church of God. They claim not for her the right of suffrage, nor any immunity by which she may "usurp authority over the man." The Bible gives her her place of majesty and dignity in the domestic circle: that is the heart of her husband and the heart of her family. It is the female supremacy of that domain, where love, tenderness, refinement, thought and feeling preside. "It is the privilege of making her husband happy and honoured, and her sons and daughters the ornaments of human society. It is the sphere of piety, prudence, diligence, in the domestic station, and a holy and devout life. It is the sphere that was occupied by Hannah, the mother of Samuel; by Elizabeth, the mother of John; by Eunice, the mother of Timothy; and by Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is the respect and esteem of mankind." It is, as Dr. Spring has said, that silent, unobserved, unobtrusive influence, by which she accomplishes more for her race, than many whose names occupy a broad space on the page of history. A woman who fills well the sphere assigned to her, as a wife, a mother, and a mistress; who trains up good citizens for the state, and good fathers and mothers of other families which are to spring from her own; and so from generation to generation in all but endless succession, need not complain that her sphere of action and her power of influence are too limited for female ambition to aspire to. The mothers of the wise and the good are the benefactresses of their species. What would be gained to woman's comfort, respectability, or usefulness, or to the welfare of society, and how much would be lost to each, by withdrawing her from her own appropriate sphere, and introducing her to that for which she

has no adaptation? Who, but a few wild visionaries, and rash speculatists, and mistaken advocates of woman's rights, would take her from the home of her husband, of her children, and of her own heart, to wear out her strength, consume her time, and destroy her feminine excellence in committee-rooms, on platforms, and in mechanics' or philosophical institutions? But may not woman, in every way in her power, benefit society by her talents and her influence? Certainly, in every legitimate way. Her sphere is clearly assigned to her by Providence; and only by very special and obvious calls should she be induced to leave it. Whatever breaks down the modest reserve, the domestic virtues, the persuasive gentleness, of woman, is an injury done to the community. Woman can be spared from the lecturer's chair, the platform of general convocation, and the scene of public business; but she cannot be spared from the hearth of her husband and the circle of her children. Substitutes can be found for her in the one, but not in the other. In the bosom of domestic privacy she fulfils with truest dignity and faithfulness the first and highest obligations of her sex. Monod's remarks on this subject are so beautiful, appropriate, and just, that I shall be more than forgiven for the following quotation.

"Is not the humble sphere which we assign to woman, precisely that for which her whole being is pre-disposed and pre-constituted? Her finer but more fragile conformation, the quicker pulsation of her heart, the more exquisite sensibility of her nerves, the delicacy of her organs, and even the softness of her features, all combine to make her what St. Peter so aptly designates 'the weaker vessel,' and render her constitutionally unfit for incessant and weighty cares, for the duties

of the state, for the vigils of the cabinet, for all that which yields renown in the world.

"Again, are not the powers of her mind equally distinct? The question is sometimes started whether they are equal to those of man. They are neither equal nor unequal; they are different, being wisely adapted to another end. For the accomplishment of the work assigned to man, woman's faculties are inferior to his; or rather she is not adapted to it. We speak of the general rule, and not of exceptions. It must be conceded that, by way of exception, there are among women some few whose intellects are adapted to the cares reserved, on principle, to the other sex, and that peculiar situations may arise in which women of ordinary capacities may be called upon to discharge the duties assigned to man, man in that case being a defaulter; it must be seen, however, that these exceptions are clearly indicated by God, or called for by the interests of humanity. For, after all, in the mission of woman, humility is but the means, charity the end, to which all must be subservient. And why should not God, who has made exceptions of this nature in sacred history, do the same in ordinary life?

"Be this as it may, we leave exceptions to God, and to the conscience of the individual, and abstaining from all irritating, personal, or contestable questions, will confine ourselves simply to the general rule.

"Generally speaking, enlarged views of politics and science, the bold flight of metaphysics, the sublimer conceptions of poetry, which bursting every shackle, soar in the boundless regions of thought and imagination, are not in the province of woman.

"In that limited sphere, however, of which we are

speaking, limited in extent, but boundless in influence, within which, supported by Scripture, we exhort woman to confine her actions, she is endowed with faculties superior to those of man, or rather, she alone is adapted to it. Here she has her requital; here she proves herself mistress of the field; and employs those secret resources (which might be termed admirable, if they did not inspire a more tender sentiment both towards her and towards God, who has so richly endowed her); her practical survey, equally sure and rapid; her quick and accurate perception; her wonderful power of penetrating the heart, in a way unknown and impracticable to man; her never-failing presence of mind and personal attention on all occasions; her constant though imperceptible vigilance; her numerous and fertile resources in the management of her domestic affairs; her ever ready access and willing audience to all who need her; her freedom of thought and action in the midst of the most agonising sufferings and accumulated embarrassments; her elasticity (may I say her perseverance?) despite of feebleness: her exquisitely tender feelings; her tact so practised, were it not instinctive; her extreme perfection in little things; her dexterous industry in the work of her hands; her incomparable skill in nursing the sick—in cheering a broken spirit—in re-awakening a sleeping conscience—in re-opening a heart that has long been closed—in fine, innumerable are the things which she accomplishes, and which man neither can discern nor effect, without the aid of her eye and hand." Milton has finely expressed the difference of the original pair:

> "For contemplation he, and valour formed;
> For softness she, and sweet attractive grace."

and this difference, by limiting their respective capacities, prescribes their separate duties and spheres of action.

Now look at woman's natural adaptation for her sphere. If the view here given of woman's mission be correct, we can in a moment perceive what is required to enable her to fulfil it. There must be, what indeed there generally is pervading the sex, a consciousness of subordination, without any sense of degradation, or any wish that it was otherwise. Woman scarcely needs to be taught, that in the domestic economy, she is second, and not first, that "the man is the head of the woman." This is a law of nature written on the heart, and coincides exactly with the law of God written on the page of revelation. It is, first of all, an instinct, and then confirmed by reason. Without this law deeply engraven and constantly felt, as well as known, her situation would be endured as a slavery, and she would be constantly endeavouring to throw off the yoke. Her condition would be wretched, and she would make all wretched around her. With such a sense of oppression, or even of hardship, pressing upon the mind, no duty could be well performed, and the family would be a scene of domestic warfare. But she generally knows her place, and feels it her happiness as well as her duty to keep it. It is not necessity, but even choice, that produces a willing subjection. She is contented it should be so, for God has implanted the disposition in her nature.

Then her gentleness is another part of her qualification for her duty. She should have, must have, really has, influence, power of impulsion, if not compulsion. Were she utterly powerless, she could do nothing. Her

influence, however, is a kind of passive power; it is the power that draws, rather than drives, and commands by obeying. Her gentleness makes her strong. How winning are her smiles, how melting her tears, how insinuating her words! Woman loses her power when she parts from her gentleness. It is this very yieldingness, like the bulrush lifting its head after the rush of water, to which it has bowed, that gives her a power to rise superior to the force of circumstances, which, if resistance were offered, would break all before them. She vanquishes by submission. How necessary is gentleness to the fulfilment of her mission, in handling the young and tender spirits of her children, and training the first delicate shoots of their infantine dispositions; and for directing the feelings of that one heart on which she depends for her happiness. There are many varieties of disposition in women, and they are of this sensitive, petulant, irritable, jealous, quick to feel and to resent; but notwithstanding all this, and under all this, there is a gentleness of disposition which indicates this vocation as destined to influence and constrain by love.

Tenderness is another of her characteristics. The former relates more to manner, this more to disposition; that to habitual conduct, towards all persons and all cases, this to the occasional exercise of sympathy with distress. Tenderness is so characteristic of the female heart, than an unfeeling woman is considered a libel upon her sex. If compassion were driven out from every other habitation, it would find there its last retreat. Her heart is so made of tenderness, that she is ever in danger of being imposed upon by craft and falsehood. How suitable such a disposition for one who is to be the chief comforter of the domestic commonwealth: who is

to mollify the wounds of her husband's heart, and to heal the sorrows of her children; whose ear is to listen to every tale of domestic woe, and whose bosom is to be the lodging-place of all the family's grief!

Self-denial is no less necessary for this domestic mission than anything I have yet mentioned. How much of ease, comfort, enjoyment, must she surrender, who has to consult her husband's comfort and will, before her own: whose happiness is to consist, in a great measure, in making others happy: who has first to endure all that is connected with giving birth to her children, and then all that is involved in nursing, watching, comforting, and training them! One of the most striking instances in our world of endurance and self-denial, both as to the extent and the cheerfulness with which it is borne, is the busy, tender, and contented mother of a rising family. God has given the power, yet I sometimes wonder how she can exercise it.

And then see her fortitude in this situation. In that courage which leads man to the cannon's mouth, to mount the breach, or to encounter some terrific danger of any other kind, she is inferior to man; but in the fortitude manifested by enduring bodily suffering, the ills of poverty, the wasting influence of long-continued privations, the gloom of solitude, the bitterness of injustice, the cruelty of neglect, the misery of oppression, is she not in all these as superior to man, as man is to her in all that appertains to brute force? On the subject of woman's fortitude and power of endurance, I will introduce, though it may be at some length, the most surprising instance of it perhaps on record, whether in inspired or uninspired history, and it will serve as an appropriate illustration of this part of the subject of the

chapter. The apostle John, in his narrative of the events of the crucifixion of our Lord, says, with beautiful simplicity, and without a single comment, as if he could not hope, and would not attempt, to add to the grandeur of the incident, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." That the other women should have been there is less wonderful, though even their presence at such a scene, (from which it would seem as if all the apostles had retired except John,) was indeed an instance of the fortitude of heroic love. But that his mother should have been there, not far off, but beside the cross, not prostrate in a swoon, or beating her breast, wringing her hands, tearing her hair, and shrieking in frantic grief, but standing, in silent, though pensive, anguish, to witness the horrors of crucifixion, so far surpassing those of any modern method of execution, the crucifixion of her son, and such a son; O wondrous woman! and act surpassing wonder! To whatever length endurance may be carried by attendance at the sick-bed of a dying friend, how few of even female heroes could witness the execution of a husband, son, or brother. I have read of one, who when her lover was executed for high treason went in a mourning coach to witness the dreadful process; and when the whole was closed by the severing that head which had leaned on her bosom, simply said, "I follow thee," and sighing forth his name, fell back in the coach, and instantly expired. Here was a power of endurance carried to a point which nature could sustain no longer, and it sunk at length crushed beneath the intolerable burden of its grief. But behold the scene before us; that mother, in the dignity and majesty of profound, yet composed

grief, enduring to the end. Peter had denied his Master: the other disciples, at the sight of the officers of justice and the soldiers, amidst the deep shadows of Gethsemane, had deserted Him, and still kept at a distance from the scene of suffering and danger; but there, standing by the cross, were those dauntless, holy women, sustaining with wondrous fortitude the sight of his dying agonies, and confessing their Lord in the hour of his deepest humiliation, in the absence of his friends, and in the presence of his foes; and there among them was his mother. I shall never wonder at anything that female fortitude, when upheld by Divine grace, can do, after it could stand in the person of Mary, at the foot of the cross, when Christ her Son and her Lord was suspended upon it. Nor shall I ever despair of the support of any woman in the hour and scene of her deepest woe, who is willing to be sustained, after I have beheld the mother of our Lord upheld in that unutterably awful situation. Painters and poets have not done justice to the dignity of this most honoured of all women. There is still existing a picture of Annibale Carracci, entitled "The three Marys," the subject of which is those holy women surveying the body of Christ after it was taken down from the cross. As a work of art it is inimitable, and does full justice to the painter's skill. But it does far less justice to the character of the mother of our Lord, than the apostle's description of her. In the painting, she is represented swooning over the dead body of Jesus, whose head reclines on her lap, while the other figures are represented in the attitude of passionate grief. How different this to the dignified, majestic, and composed grief which stood beneath the

cross. So far must art ever fall beneath nature, still lower below the wonders of grace, and most of all below such grace as was vouchsafed to the mother of our Lord.

Let females study this pathetic and amazing scene, and learn that the deepest love, and the noblest grief, are not that sickly sensibility, that emotional excitability, which are too tender to bear the sight of suffering; but instead of sinking with hysterical outcries, or retiring with averted eyes from agonies, or swooning at the sight of tears and blood, can control the feelings and brace the nerves, to perform in the hour and scene of woe, a part which none can perform except herself, or at any rate none can perform so well. Let young women set out in life practising that discipline of their emotions, which without diminishing aught of that softness and tenderness of manner which are the most lovely characteristics of their sex, or robbing their hearts of those delicate sympathies and sensibilities which constitute the glory of woman's nature, will preserve their judgment from being enveloped in such a mist of feeling, and their will from being so enervated, as to make them incapable of resolution, and render them incompetent in times of their own sorrow and trial for any thing besides weeping over the calamities which they might otherwise remove, and to make them altogether unfit for those hardy services of mercy which the miseries of others will sometimes require at their hands.

Arising out of this self-discipline, and as one beautiful display of it, see woman when called to put forth her gentleness, her sympathy and her self-denial, in the hour of affliction, and the chamber of sickness. It has

been somewhere beautifully said, that "In sickness there is no hand like woman's hand, no heart like woman's heart." A man's breast may swell with unquestionable sorrow, and apprehension may rend his mind; yet place him by the sick couch, and in the light, or I should rather say in the shadow, of the sad lamp by which it is watched; let him have to count over the long dull hours of night, and wait, alone and sleepless, the grey dawn struggling into the chamber of suffering; let him be appointed to this ministry, even for the sake of the brother of his heart, or the father of his being, and his grosser nature, even when most perfect, will tire, his eye will close, and his spirit grow impatient of the dreary task; and, though his love and anxiety remain undiminished, his mind will own to itself a creeping in of irresistible selfishness, which indeed he may be ashamed of, and struggle to reject, but which, despite of all his efforts, will remain to characterise his nature, and prove in one respect, at least, the weakness of man. But see a mother, a sister, or a wife, in his place! The woman feels no weariness, and has no thought of herself. In silence and in the depth of night, she bears up not only passively, but so far as the term, with the necessary qualification, may express our meaning, with delight. Her ear acquires a blind man's instinct, as from time to time it catches the slightest stir, or whisper, or breath, of the now more than ever loved one, who lies under the hand of human affliction. Her step, as she moves in obedience to an impulse or signal, would not waken a mouse; if she speaks, her accents are a soft echo of natural harmony, most delicious to the sick man's ear, conveying all that sound can convey of pity, comfort, and devotion; and

thus, night after night, she tends him like a creature sent from a higher world, when all earthly watchfulness has failed; her eye never winking, her mind never palled, her nature, which at all other times is weakness, now gaining a superhuman strength and magnanimity, herself forgotten, and her sex alone predominant."

But as woman's mission is in an especial sense one of charity, love is, above all things, essential to its right performance. Here again, I will give a long quotation from Monod's beautiful work.

"But in speaking of love, it is less the degree than the character which is of importance. Love, as we have before said, is the very essence of woman's existence. But what love? Let her reflect, and she will find that it is precisely that love which predisposes her for the vocation of beneficence prescribed for her by the Scriptures. There are two kinds of love, love which receives, and love which gives. The former rejoices in the sentiment which it inspires, and the sacrifice it obtains; the second delights in the sentiment which it experiences, and the sacrifice which it makes. These two kinds of love seldom subsist apart, and woman knows them both. But is it too much to say, that in her the second predominates? and that her motto, borrowed from the spontaneous love of her Saviour, is, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

"To be loved! This, we well know, is the joy of a woman's heart; but alas, how often is the joy denied her! Yet let her continue to love, to consecrate herself by love; it is the exigency of her soul, the very law of her existence: a law which nothing can ever hinder her from obeying.

"Man also is no stranger to this feeling; he, too,

must love; but his is the love in which St. Paul sums up the obligations imposed upon the husband in conjugal life, 'Husbands, love your wives,' even as he sums up the duties of submission on the part of the wife: 'Wives, obey your husbands.' But what we are treating of here, is not the obligation, nor the faculty; it is the inclination to love.

"Love, it must be remembered, is less spontaneous, less disinterested among men than among women. Less spontaneous; man is often obliged to conquer himself, in order to love; woman need only listen to the dictates of her innate feelings. Hence, Scripture, which frequently commands the 'husband to love,' abstains from giving this command to the wife, taking it for granted that nature herself would supply the injunction.

"Moreover, the love of woman is more disinterested. Man loves woman more for his own sake than for hers; woman, on the contrary, loves man less for her own sake than for his. Man because he is not sufficient in himself, loves that which has been given him of God; woman, because she feels that she is needed, loves him to whom God has given her. If solitude weighs heavily upon man, it is because life has no charms for him when separated from his help meet; if woman dreads living alone, it is because life has lost its aim, while she has none to whom she can be 'a help meet.' Of her it may be said, if we may be permitted to make the comparison, in the emphatic language of Scripture, 'We love her because she first loved us.'"

If such, then, be woman's mission (and who will deny or question it?) how immensely important it is that it should be well understood, and that she should be properly trained to perform it well. But is it

really understood, and is education so conducted as to qualify woman for her mission? It requires little knowledge of modern society to answer these questions in the negative.

Parents, and especially mothers, ye who have daughters, to you appertains the serious, and deliberate, and prayerful consideration of this momentous and deeply interesting subject. Look upon those girls whom Providence has committed to your care, and say to yourselves, "I very distinctly perceive, and as impressively feel, the importance of the female character on account of its influence upon the well-being of society. And it is clear to me, that woman's is a domestic mission, which is to affect society through the medium of family influence. As she fills up her place with wisdom and propriety, so will she promote the well-being of the community. Nor is it society only, but the Church of Christ, that is concerned in, and promoted by, the female character. Now, I have daughters, who must contribute their share of influence to the public weal or woe. How shall they be educated, so as best to fulfil their mission, should they be called to preside over the domestic economy? It depends much upon me, whether they fail or succeed in this their mission." These are appropriate, weighty, and necessary reflections, peculiarly belonging to mothers. To them, I say, In all your conduct never let these thoughts and views be long out of your minds. Look beyond the drawing-rooms of your friends, where your daughters are to be sometimes seen, perhaps shown. Look higher than to get them married, even well married. Take into account their being well qualified to fulfil their mission. Set them before you as the future heads of a domestic

establishment, and prepare them to preside over it with dignity and efficiency.

How much in modern education is calculated, if not intended, rather to prepare our females to dazzle in the circle of fashion and the gay party, than to shine in the retirement of home! To polish the exterior by what are called accomplishments, seems to be more the object than to give a solid substratum of piety, intelligence, good sense, and social virtue. Never was a subject less understood than education. To store the memory with facts, or to cultivate the taste for music, singing, drawing, languages, and needle work, are the ultimatum with many. The use of the intellect in the way of deep reflection, sound judgment, accurate discrimination, is not taught as it should be; while the direction of the will, the cultivation of the heart, and the formation of the character, are lamentably neglected. I ask not the sacrifice of anything that can add grace, elegance, and ornament, to the feminine character; but I do want incorporated with this, more of what is masculine in knowledge and wisdom. I want to see woman educated not to be man's plaything, but his companion. I want to see her invested with something higher and better than fashionable littleness, elegant trifles, and fascinating airs. I want her to be fitted to hold fast her husband's heart by the esteem he bears for her judgment; to inspire confidence and reverence in her children, and in that home where her influence is so potent, to train up men and women who shall add to the strength and glory of the nation. In this, let mothers be assisted by those to whom they entrust the education of their daughters when they pass from their hands. It is

melancholy to think of the incompetency of a large portion of those to whom the education of females is entrusted. How little has it ever occurred to many of them to inquire into woman's mission; what is necessary to qualify her for it; and how they shall aid her in obtaining this fitness! How rarely does it come within their comprehension that it is their duty, and should be their study, to impart not only knowledge, but wisdom; not only to train the performer, the artist, or the linguist, but to lay the foundation for the character of the sincere Christian, the intelligent woman, the prudent wife, the judicious mother, the sagacious mistress, and the useful member of society!

And if there be no impropriety in turning aside for a few moments to address myself as well to fathers, I would say to them, study deeply, and ponder much the momentous importance of the domestic constitution. In the present age, how much has been said and written respecting improvements in society; but never let it be forgotten that all radical improvement must commence in the homes and at the hearts of our families. The enquiries how best to cure existing evils, or to supply existing defects, which do not begin here, will be superficial in their nature, and unsatisfactory in their results. It is in the correct understanding of the nature of parental obligations, and the right discharge of the duties of man and wife towards each other and their children, that the chief restorative remedy for the diseases of a nation must be sought, as well as the best means of preserving its health. Institutions may be set up to aid or to supplement a father's efforts, or to alter the nature or widen the sphere of woman's mission; and an artificial state of social life may be pro-

duced, varnished and glittering with the showy devices of human wisdom, but it will be found in the end, that the purposes of the God of nature, the Great Author of human society, cannot be frustrated; and that the parent must still be the educator of the child, and home the school for the formation of character.

And here I would remind you of your privileges as Protestants, in having no intruder thrusting himself into your families, or exerting, without coming there, through the medium of the confessional, and from behind the parent's chair, an influence greater than that of the parents, whether father or mother. A French writer thus depicts the homes of his country: "The question is about our family, that sacred asylum in which we all desire to seek the repose of the heart. We return, exhausted, to the domestic hearth; but do we find there the repose we sigh for? Let us not dissemble, but acknowledge to ourselves how things are. There is in our family a sad difference of sentiment, and the most serious of all. We may speak to our mothers, wives, and daughters, on any of the subjects which form the topics of conversation with indifferent persons, such as business or the news of the day; but never on subjects that affect the heart, or moral life, such as eternity, religion, the soul, and God! Choose, for instance, the moment when we naturally feel disposed to meditate with our family in common thought, some quiet evening, at the family table; venture even there, in your own house, at your own fire-side, to say one word about these things: your mother sadly shakes her head; your wife contradicts you; your daughter by her very silence shews her disapprobation. They are on one side of the table, and you on the other, alone. One would think

that in the midst of them, and opposite to you, was seated an invisible personage to contradict whatever you may say." This scene the author cannot forget. He recurs to it once more: "You enter a house in the evening, and sit down at the family table: one thing will almost always strike you; the mother and daughters are together of one and the same opinion, on one side, whilst the father is on the other, and alone. What does this mean? It means that there is some one man at his table whom you do not see, to contradict and give the lie to whatever the father may utter."*

Nor should young females themselves be kept in ignorance of woman's mission. Their future destiny, as stated in the last chapter, should sometimes by a wise mother or an able governess, be set before them; and they themselves reminded how much is necessary on their part, to prepare themselves for their future lot. They must be reminded that above and beyond accomplishments, their character is to be formed; which never can be done without their own aid. They must

* "Priests, Women, and Families," by Michelet. There are many opinions in this work, which I cannot for a moment be supposed to approve, but is not this view of the domestic economy in France too true? Thus every domestic hearth is daily infested by the intrusion of one man, strangely styled the director, or spiritual guide! The individual whom we are accustomed to regard as the head of the house, the father, is treated by the intruder as a cipher. In his absence, court is paid to the mother, the weaker vessel, and what seems to us as singular as it is melancholy, we are assured, the father is generally aware that these men are bringing up his children against himself! A more fatal and shameful invasion of God's constitution has never been framed. It resembles the recorded origin of all evil. Here is the serpent once more beguiling Eve through his subtlety. This intruder on forbidden ground must prove 'the canker-worm of many a gentle breast.'—*Anderson's Domestic Constitution.*

be early impressed, not indeed in a way to inflate their vanity, but to excite their ambition, to stimulate their energies, and to direct their aim, that they have a mission on earth, for which it becomes them most anxiously and most diligently to prepare themselves. My young friends, let it be your constant aim, and at the same time your earnest prayer, that you may first of all thoroughly understand your mission, and then diligently prepare for it, and hereafter as successfully fulfil it. Look round and see what women commend themselves most to your judgment as worthy of imitation. You will see some, perhaps, in whom, as Monod says, reserve has degenerated into supineness; activity into restlessness; vigilance into curiosity; tact into cunning; penetration into censoriousness; promptitude into levity; fluency into loquacity; grace into coquetry; taste into fastidiousness; aptitude into presumption; influence into intrigue; authority into domination; and tenderness into morbid susceptibility; some whose power of loving is converted into jealousy, and their desire of usefulness into obtrusiveness. From such turn away, as from examples in which the best qualities are metamorphosed into the worst. And equally avoid those whose whole aim seems to be to amuse and to be amused; whose vanity is predominant, even in matronly age: and who appear, in their taste for gaiety, company, and entertainments, to forget that they have any mission upon earth, except to flutter in a drawing-room, and to dazzle its guests. On the contrary, select for your models those who seem to be aware of woman's destiny and mission, as a help meet for man.

If in closing a chapter, already too long, I may suggest a few things which, in preparing to fulfil well your

future mission, it is of importance you should attend to, I would mention the following:

Deeply ponder, that character for life is usually formed in youth. It is the golden season of life, and to none more truly and eminently so than to the young woman. Her leisure, her freedom from care, and her protected situation, give her the opportunity for this, which it is her wisdom and her duty to consider, embrace, and improve.

It is of immense consequence you should consider that whosoever may help you, and whatever appliances from without may be brought to bear upon your mind and heart, you must, to a considerable extent, be the constructor of your own character. Set out in life with a deep conviction of the momentous consequence of self-discipline. Let your mind, your heart, your conscience, be the chief object of your solicitude.

Lay the basis of all your excellences in true religion, the religion of the heart, the religion of penitence, faith in Christ, love to God, a holy and heavenly mind. No character can be well-constructed, safe, complete, beautiful, or useful, without this.

Cultivate those dispositions of mind which have especial reference to your future mission as the help meet for man. Improve your mind, and grow in intelligence by a thirst for knowledge; for how can an ignorant woman be a companion for a sensible man? Cherish a thoughtful, reflective turn of mind. Look beneath the surface of things; beyond their present aspect to their future consequences. Be somewhat meditative, and learn to restrain your words and feelings, by a rigid self-control. Pay most anxious attention to your temper, and acquire as much as possible its perfect com-

mand. More women are rendered miserable, and render others miserable, by neglect of this, than perhaps from any other cause whatever. Let meekness of disposition and gentleness of manner be a constant study. These are woman's amiabilities, which fit her for her future situation far better than the bold, imposing, and obtrusive airs of those who mistake the secret of woman's influence.

Contentment and patience; self-denial and submission; humility and subordination; prudence and discretion, are all virtues, the seeds of which should be sown by you in early youth, that their rich ripe fruits might be gathered in future life. Benevolence of heart, and kindness of disposition, must be among your foremost studies, the most prominent objects of your pursuit and most laborious endeavours; for they are the virtues which in their maturity are to form matronly excellence, and constitute you the fit companion for a husband.

Make accomplishments subordinate to more substantial excellences. Let the former be to the latter only as the burnish of the gold, or the cutting of the diamond. And as matters of mental taste are to be less thought of than the state of the heart and the formation of moral character, so let especially bodily decorations be in low estimation compared with those of the mind.

To prepare you to carry out the duties of your future mission with ease to yourself, with satisfaction to a husband, and comfort to a household, pay attention to the minor virtues, punctuality, love of order, and dispatch. These are all of immense importance, the want of them in the female head of a family, must necessarily fill the home with confusion, and the hearts

of its inmates with sadness. Set out in life with a deep conviction of the importance of habits, and a constant recollection that habits for life are formed in youth: and that these habits, if not acquired then, are likely never to be.

Aim at universal excellence. Do little things well. Avoid with extreme dread a loose, slovenly, and careless way of doing anything proper to be done.

Young Women, your whole future life will illustrate and confirm the truth and propriety of this advice, either by the comfort and usefulness which will result from your attending to it, or by the miseries which you will endure yourself and inflict on others, if you allow it to sink into oblivion. It is in this way only you can fulfil, with effect, that which it has been the object of this chapter to set before you, Woman's mission in social life.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY PIETY.

PROVERBS viii, 17.

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."

How fascinating is nature in the second quarter of the year. Spring, lovely, animating spring, then sheds its reviving and gladdening smiles upon us. It is always a season of beauty. "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." Nature stands forth dressed in her garb of living green, decorated with the chaste colours and perfumed with the mild fragrance, of the violet, the primrose, and the cowslip. It is a season of joy as well as beauty; recently recovered from the gloom of wintry months the earth smiles and is vocal with delight. The feathered songsters of the grove blend their notes with the lowing of the herds and the bleating of the flocks; and the harmony is completed by the joyful sounds of the husbandman and the gentle music of the breeze. But it is also a season of activity as well as of loveliness and delight, the torpor

produced by short days and cold nights is succeeded by universal motion. The farmer is busy in his fields, the florist in his greenhouse, and the horticulturist in his garden, for full well is it known and felt, that a seedless spring must be followed by a fruitless autumn. Hope too adds radiance and delight to vernal scenes. The blade springing from the well-cultivated soil, and the blossom on the well-pruned tree, give the promise and prospect of the future crop.

And what is youth but the vernal period of existence; it is the season of beauty and of joy, it should be the season of activity and of hope. It is then that the beauty of the human form is in all its untainted freshness, and the spirits of our animal nature are in all their unchecked vigour. And it is then that all the energies of the soul should be put forth in the way of self-improvement, to awaken the hopes, not only of their possessor, but of every observer. Do, my young friends, thus look abroad upon the field of nature; not only to poetize, but to moralize; not only to admire, but to imitate; not only to feel the throb of pleasure and the thrill of delight, but to learn lessons of wisdom, and collect motives for self-improvement. You are, indeed you you are, passing through the spring of your life; and as in nature, so in your existence, there can be but one spring; and in each case, it is the spring that will give the character to the seasons that follow it. It is then the seeds of intelligence, of prudence, of virtue, of piety, must be sown, or there will be no produce in the after-periods of your history. A seedless spring must here also be followed by a fruitless autumn, and a destitute, dreary, and cheerless winter, and for this reason this chapter is devoted to the enforcement of early piety.

Your first concern, and deep indeed should that concern be, is, of course, to understand the nature of real religion. This is of momentous importance. No language can exaggerate it. There can be no hyperbole here. Upon a right understanding of this subject is suspended your happiness for eternity. Ponder that word eternity, and think of the millions of millions of ages, passing comprehension, it includes; all to be filled with torment or bliss, according as you understand and practise, or mistake the nature and neglect the claims of true religion. Should not this awaken solicitude of the deepest kind? What should increase the concern of your mind to intense solicitude, and almost to distress, is, that both our Lord and his apostles, by what they have said, lead us to believe that mistakes on this subject are very common and very destructive, as you may learn by consulting the following passages of Holy Scripture: Matt. vii, 13-28; 1 Cor. xiii; 2 Cor. xiii, 5-7; Gal. iv, 11-18; vi, 3-5.

To guard against mistakes, go to the right source of information; consult the only infallible oracle, the Word of God. You have the Bible in your hand; search that, search it yourselves for yourselves. Do not be satisfied with merely consulting men's works, but consult God's own Word. All churches, whatever they may boast, may err, have erred, and have no authority or ability to settle this matter for you. Creeds and catechisms, prayer-books and missals, formularies and confessions, are none of them pure truth: this is true only of the Bible. The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Christians. Not that I would have you reject the help of other things, but only their authority. An humble, docile mind will be thankful for human aid

in the great business of religion. There is a medium between despising assistance and so depending upon it as to cast off all self-inquiry. The pert and flippant self-sufficiency which would lead a young woman to neglect, or even to despise, the judgment of those whose calling it is to teach the Word of God, and who have studied it more closely than it is possible she can have done, is no proof of that humility which is one of the brightest ornaments of her sex. I do not, therefore, teach young females to think lightly of the assistance rendered by ministers and books, in the momentous concerns of religion; but simply remind them of their duty to search for themselves the Scriptures, by whose authority all books and all ministers are to be tried.

Before I dwell on this source of information, as to the nature of religion, I may just remark that there are one or two things which must of necessity characterise religion. Since it has, first of all and chiefly, to do with God, and since God can and does regard, search, and judge the heart, its true seat must be the heart. It is not a mere outward thing, a round of ceremonies, or a course of unintelligent action. The soul must be religious; the whole inner self, the intellect, the will, the affections, the conscience, must be under the influence of piety. Mark this; there must be thought, choice, affection, and conscientiousness. Again; whatever be true religion, it must primarily relate to God, and must of necessity be a right state of mind and heart towards him. It must also be to its possessor a very serious, solemn, important matter; it supposes great concern for it as an affair of salvation, eternity, heaven. It must produce a character very different from that of the person who is not living under its influence. It is too

great a matter to leave no mark, to produce no impression, to form no peculiarity. So that we may be sure where it lives properly in the heart, it will develope itself visibly in the outward character.

With these ideas, which are at once obvious, instructive, and impressive, let us open the New Testament and see what descriptions of religion we find there; and I beg your very closest attention to them, as in the presence of God, and the prospect of eternity. The apostle Paul, in setting forth the subject and substance of his ministry, describes it thus, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." This then is true religion, repentance and faith. If we turn to the gospel by John, we read thus, "But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is also repeated, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This is religion, a new spiritual birth; or in other words an entire spiritual renovation of our fallen and corrupt nature. Then again we may quote the apostle's words in that beautiful chapter on charity, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." These also constitute religion, faith, hope, and love. Similar to this is his language in his epistle to the Galatians, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." This is an immensely important passage, as showing

that no outward ceremonial observance or church relationship constitute religion; but a true simple faith in Christ for salvation; producing love to God, to man, to holiness. This accords with what our Lord said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Then again, the apostle said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Observe then from these passages what is religion, and its usual order. True conviction of sin; deep solicitude about pardon and salvation; confession of sin, without defence, excuse, or palliation; genuine repentance; self-renunciation; faith in Christ, or a simple reliance on him for salvation; the new birth, or an entire change of our corrupt nature; love to God, leading to obedience of his commands, and a holy life; a serious observance of all the ordinances of religion, including baptism and the Lord's supper. Are these things so? Is this the description of religion given us in the New Testament? Who will pretend to deny it? Search for yourselves! You will see at once how this answers to the general description of it previously given, as a thing of the heart, a right state of mind towards God, a matter of deep

concern to the mind that possesses it, and making an obvious distinction between her who has it and her who has it not.

You are in danger, my young friends, from the female temperament, from your sensibility, susceptibility and imaginativeness, of having your minds led astray on the subject of religion, and of considering it rather as a matter of feeling than of principle, as belonging rather to the emotions than to the judgment and the will. You are liable to be seduced from the truth by appeals to the senses and the imagination, as the spurious religion of the present day abounds with them. But I again say, search the New Testament and judge for yourselves, and say what do you find there about tasteful architecture, gorgeous ceremonies, splendid dresses, sacerdotal power, sacred days, either of fasting or festivity, church authority, or even the prevalence of devotional observances over moral duties. What you find everywhere is faith, love, peace, hope, holiness: a religion of which devotion is indeed an element, but only one out of n any; being ever associated with self-government, conscientiousness, social excellence, and charity. Nor is the religion of the New Testament merely that state of mind which is moved by a pathetic sermon, which melts at the Lord's supper, or is excited by the appeals of a missionary meeting. Religion has to do, I know, with our whole nature, and therefore with its emotional part; but then, the degree of sensibility so much depends upon physical constitution, that a sense of excitement during religious ordinances is far less to be depended upon as a test of personal godliness, than rigid self-government, resolute will in the way of righteousness, and tender conscientiousness, exercised in

obedience to the Divine authority, and under a constraining sense of the love of Christ. None are more in danger, therefore, of self-delusion on this subject, than yourselves.

I may now lay before you the obligations you are under to possess, and ever to cultivate and act under the influence of, such a religion as this. I say obligations. This word is stern and hard, but not too much so. The subject is pressed upon your judgment, heart, will, and conscience, by all the weight and power of a Divine authority. Religion is not one of those matters which are submitted to your option, for which if you have a taste, well: and if not, still well. Nor are you left to form your own religion, and to select for yourself the form in which you will please God and find your way to heaven. This is the dangerous delusion of many in the present day. It is all well enough, they think, to be religious after some fashion; but each must adopt his own way of serving God. Upon this principle of resolving it all into taste, the person of no religion if his taste be that way, is on nearly the same footing as he whose religion is simply according to his own liking. The truth must be told, and told plainly too; that there is but one religion, and that is the religion of the Bible. To be pious at all, we must be pious in God's way. It would be a strange thing if, when a master had given strict and explicit written orders to a servant how he should be served, the servant should choose his own way of obedience, and set aside the directions he had received. In all honesty, therefore, I must tell you at once, harsh as the declaration may seem, that without religion, and without the religion of the Bible too, you will perish everlastingly. There is no

way to heaven but by the religion of the Bible. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." These are awful words, they roll like thunder, and flash like lightning, not from Sinai, but from Calvary, and they should be pondered by all who hear or read them.

The obligations to a life of religion arise out of the relations in which you stand to God. He is your Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor: and you are his creatures, his dependents, and his beneficiaries. You feel, my young friends, your obligations to your parents, arising out of your relation to them. As a child, you feel bound to love, and serve, and please them. What, and not feel your relation to God, which is a thousand times more close than that of your connection with them? Yes, you sustain an individual relationship to God. Do you consider this? Have you considered it? Have you ever yet, in devout seriousness, said, "What, and where, is God my maker? What do I owe him, and how should I conduct myself towards him?" Is God the only relation you should leave out of consideration and forget? Did you ever yet in all your life devoutly ponder this relationship to God, and the claims which it brings? Why, if he had never commanded you to love and serve him, you ought to do so, on account of this relationship. But he has commanded it. Your Bible is his demand upon you. It is God's voice, enjoining you to be truly, and constantly, and consistently religious. It is his formal, explicit, frequently and solemnly repeated claim. Its injunctions command, its invitations allure, its promises encourage, its threatenings warn, its judgments alarm you, to be

truly pious. It is given to teach you what religion is, how it is to be practised, and how it will be rewarded.

And then this is all addressed to you. Religion is not merely the concern of the middle-aged and the old, but of the young; not of the other sex only, but of yours. Indeed it has ever flourished more among persons of your sex and age than among any other class. To imagine it is only the business of old age and a death-bed, is an insult both to it and God. Ought he not to have the first and the best of our days? Should he be put off with the dregs of life? Will you dare entertain such an idea as offering those dying remains of existence, that are of no service for any thing else, the refuse of sin, Satan, and the world? Does not your fear tremble at such a thought, and your generosity scorn it, and your sense of gratitude recoil from it?

Seriously attend to the following motives by which early piety may be enforced upon you. Alas, that you should need them! Think of its being told to the angels in heaven, that mortals upon earth need to be urged by inducements to love, serve, and glorify that God, whose service is felt to be their bliss, their honour, and their reward. However, you do need them, and they are at hand.

There are motives which apply to you in common with the other sex. Such, for instance, as the nature of religion itself. What for dignity, for happiness, for honour, can be compared with it? What constituted the glory of unfallen woman in Paradise? Religion. It was her piety towards God that invested Eve, before she had spoiled the beauty of her soul, with her brightest charms. Conceive of her, bending in lowly reverence, in ardent affection, and with inexpressible gratitude, before the

throne of God; passing with holy dread and averted eye the tree of knowlege, to feed upon the fruit which grew upon the tree of life, and to hold communion with her husband in that sacramental type and pledge of immortality. Not a thought, feeling, or volition, was then in opposition to God. She heard his voice in the garden, and hasted to meet him. Now religion is intended to bring you back as near to that state as our fallen nature in this sinful world will admit of. Yes, religion was the repose of her happy and holy spirit, of which the fall deprived her; and which it is the design of the whole scheme of redemption to restore to her daughters as well as to her sons. True, your religion must have some ingredients which hers before her lapse had not: but in so far as it consists in the service of God, it is the same in substance. Look up into heaven, and what constitutes the felicity and glory of the blessed inhabitants of that happy world? Is not religion the beauty of every spirit made perfect, the ephod in which every seraph ministers before the throne of the Eternal? But to judge of the real dignity, honour, and felicity, of true religion, hear what our Divine Lord said. On one occasion, "A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." And who does not admit the justice of addressing this congratulation to that distinguished woman, to whom was granted the honour of being the mother of the Saviour of the world? What woman on earth would not have esteemed such an honour infinitely higher than to have been the queen of the whole earth? And yet what was the reply of Christ? "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." Yea, she is to be con-

gratulated: but still higher is the honour of being a child of God by true piety, than the honour of being the mother of Christ without it." Beautiful is the language of Quesnel, the pious Jansenist, on this passage, "The Holy Virgin is not blessed in having borne Christ, on any other account; but only because he, being much more holy than the holiest of saints, made her worthy to be his mother, by sanctifying her. Christ does not blame the woman for praising his mother, but he completes it by intimating that her blessedness proceeded from her having borne the Son of God in her heart, even before she bare him in her womb." In other words he declares her honour as a woman would have been of no account to her, but for her religion as a saint.*

Is it possible, my young female friends, to find a richer, loftier commendation of the dignity and felicity of true religion than this, which places those who possess it above the honour of giving birth to the humanity of Christ? I ask you most intently to ponder this passage of the gospel history.

In common with the other sex, you also are liable to the stroke of death, and therefore youth may be the

* Could any language of our Lord have tended more effectually to rebuke the preposterous and blasphemous honours which are paid to the Virgin by the Papists? It would seem that, foreseeing all that the church of Rome has accumulated of error and impiety in this way, he had determined in the most effectual and impressive manner to furnish the antidote and refutation in this impressive language. Let any one study the spirit of this reply of Christ to the congratulation of the woman that blessed his mother, and say if it is not the most convincing answer which could be given to the dreadful system of Mariolatry, which prevails so extensively in that corrupt and apostate church.

only time given you to attend to this high concern; so that if neglected then, it may be neglected for ever. In the pathetic and poetical language of Job it is said, "Man cometh forth like a flower and is cut down." How impressive this figure of the frailty of humanity. Man is not like the cedar of Lebanon, or the oak of the forest, which defies and outlives the storms of centuries; no, nor the shrub of the mountain side; or even the flower, watched by the gardener's care and protected by the green-house from the frost and hail, the storm and rain, but the flower exposed to the force of the elements, and the vicissitudes of the weather, soon and easily destroyed by adverse influences. Such is humanity, tender, frail, and fragile. How often have we seen some lovely flower in our garden, prepared by nature to live in full-blown beauty through a long summer, suddenly pierced by the arrows of frost, just when its bud was bursting and opening its beauties to the sun and the eyes of the beholder, and then drooping its head upon its stalk, and gradually withering away. So also have we often seen an amiable girl, apparently destined to live long upon earth, smitten by consumption, at a time when all her powers of body and of mind were developing into womanhood, and then wasting away by incurable disease, till death closed the scene and left us weeping over the lovely flower cut down in spring. What multitudes of such faded, withering flowers do we see every year. Could we from some high place in the air look down into all the chambers of sickness only of one town, how many estimable young females should we see sinking under disease, amidst the tears of parents sorrowfully beholding their pride and hope thus incurably diseased; and others amidst the anguish of heart-stricken

lovers thus witnessing the flower cut down just when they expected to transplant it into their own garden of domestic delights. Oh painful reverse, to sigh out the last adieu at such a time and under such circumstances; to put on the shroud instead of the bridal attire; to go down to the tomb instead of taking possession of the elegantly furnished house; and be gathered to the "congregation of the dead," instead of going into the gay circle of the living! Does this never happen? Alas, ye mourners, your sighs and tears answer in the affirmative. Yes, and you, my young friends, may add to the number. Would you die without religion? No, you answer, not for a thousand worlds. Then why live another hour without it? To have it in a dying hour, you must seek it in living ones. Few find it on the bed of death. With religion shedding its lustre on the tomb, and pouring its consolations into your bosom; with the attractions of heaven drawing up your soul to its glories; with a hope full of immortality surveying the mansions of the just men made perfect; you will be able to turn away from earth when it is holding out its brightest scenes to your view, and scarcely cast one longing lingering look behind.*

But should you live, as in all probability you will, still if you neglect religion in youth, you will most likely neglect it for ever. There is nothing more likely to perpetuate itself than neglect, in every case and in reference to every thing. Procrastination grows, like other things, with indulgence. Nothing in all the world requires prompt decision so much as religion. Nothing

[* The author here inserted from "The Flower Faded," an account of Martha ——, to which the reader is referred.—Ed.]

is more likely to be postponed for ever, if postponed from the present moment. I have no doubt you intend to be pious. You would shudder at the idea of deliberately purposing and determining to abandon religion for ever. It would appear to you the height of impiety, a species of blasphemy, to say, "I will never become a Christian." Yes, and it is thus that Satan would cheat you out of your salvation. He will allow you to be as solemn, and serious, and even sincere, in your intentions, as you please, to be religious at some future time, if he can persuade you to put it off from the present moment "to a more convenient season." But you must be told that not one in a thousand of those who go through the period of youth amidst evangelical advantages of religion, and with a deliberate postponement of the matter to futurity, ever fulfil their purposes. Those who come to womanhood, and collect around them the cares and anxieties of a wife, a mother, and a mistress, without religion, rarely ever find leisure or inclination for it in such circumstances.

But I now go on to dwell on some motives and persuasives to early piety, which appertain with greater force to your sex than to the other; or at any rate to a large proportion of it. Consider then your natural temperament. There can be no doubt that though religion is not exclusively, nor principally, it is partially, a matter of emotion. In many affairs of human conduct we are moved to action partly by our feelings, even before the decisions of the judgment are made and deliberated upon. The head should always move and lead the heart, but oftentimes the heart rouses and moves the head. The feelings are excited even when the judgment is only half-awake and informed. This is no

doubt the case in religion. Your quick sensibility, your soft nature, your tender heart, your great imaginativeness, render you naturally susceptible of pious impressions. Religion contains not only much that is stern, bold, sublime; much that is truly logical, and truly philosophical, which addresses itself to the judgment; but much that is pathetic, tender, and touching, which appeals to the heart. You are easily moved to fear, and therefore the terrors of the Divine law have greater power to cause you to tremble. You are readily excited to pity, sorrow, and love; and therefore the gospel, that wondrous mixture of suffering, grief, and mercy, powerfully stirs up your tender emotions and calls into exercise your gentle affections. I do not forget that you partake of the common corruption of our nature, and that you also need the grace of the Holy Spirit for your conversion: but still I contend, that so far as natural advantages are to be taken into consideration, the very temperament of your minds is in your favour. Hence it is that so many more women are truly pious than men. It is not that the gospel is unworthy the more robust intellect of the other sex; but that it falls in more with the softer nature of yours. In most things the God of grace seems to follow the order established by the God of nature.

I may mention in reference to many of you, your sheltered condition at home, and the protection you there enjoy. Your brothers must go out into the world, encounter its temptations, and be exposed to its moral dangers. While they are in peril of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience on the troubled ocean of human life; you are in the quiet haven of a pleasant domicile. Or, to change the metaphor, you are nestling

under cover of a mother's wing; while they are left in all their inexperience and moral feebleness to the attacks of birds of prey.

Besides this, at home you enjoy, if the children of the godly, many religious advantages. There, you are called to join in offering the morning and evening sacrifice at the altar of family devotion. There, you regularly accompany your parents to the house of God; keep holy the Sabbath; and enjoy the other ordinances of social worship. There you are guarded from the withering influence of evil companionship. How favourable is all this to the cultivation of piety! Should your heart be inclined to serve the Lord, you have not to encounter the jeers of scoffing associates, the poisoned arrows of infidel wit, or the sharp spear of profane humour. No heroic or martyr-like moral courage is requisite to enable you to persevere in a religious course, as is sometimes the case with your brothers; on the contrary, every advantage will be afforded you; every stone will be gathered out of your path.

Nor is this all, for independently of parental vigilance and home-protection, your sex is less exposed to the assaults of those temptations which, assailing young men, and conquering the virtue of so many, harden their hearts against the impressions of religion. A keen sense of female decorum has thrown a covering over you. By common consent, a vicious woman is a more vicious character than a profligate man, and hence is a more rare one. The prodigal son is, alas, no unfrequent character, but the profligate daughter does not often occur. A tenth part of the criminality which some men commit and yet retain their place in society, would banish a woman from it for ever. It is the high sense of female

honour, the moral delicacy, the fastidious modesty, which are at once your glory and your protection. But then this very circumstance increases your responsibility. You are not hardened by crime into insensibility; nor confirmed in guilty habits by repeated acts of sin; nor petrified by infidelity into a stone-like indifference to religious impressions. Your moral susceptibilities are not so blunted by long continued vicious courses as to leave no avenue to your hearts open for the voice of warning.

And then consider one thing more, your leisure. I now speak of females living at home with their parents, and not necessitated to earn their own support by their own labour. Your time, except that which is put under requisition by a judicious mother, for her assistance in household matters, is all your own. Your brothers, whether at home or abroad, must of necessity be much engaged in business. Their time is scarcely at their own command: and too often this is felt, or at any rate pleaded, as an excuse for neglecting the claims of religion and the salvation of the soul. You have no such excuse. Your time is so much at command that you can walk, or read, or work, or visit at will. You have so much leisure, that to get rid of time, which sometimes hangs heavy on your hand, some of you I fear squander hours every day upon useless labours of fancy and taste. You, of all persons in our world, can with the least truth say you have no time to think of eternity, no opportunity to seek for salvation. Is it possible you should overlook your present happy freedom from solicitude of almost every kind? You will perhaps at once think of the apostle's words: "There is a difference between a wife and a virgin: the unmarried woman careth for the things of

the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." How much of instruction, warning, and advice, is there in these few words. The apostle did not intend to say that all unmarried females actually do, alas, we know that too many of them do not, care to please the Lord: but his meaning is that in the absence of all the solicitudes of a wife, a mother, and the mistress of a house, they have most opportunity to attend to the things that belong to the soul. Ah, young women, you can perhaps form some idea of what awaits you by seeing what has come upon the head, the heart, and the hands of your mother. With the most judicious domestic arrangements and a mind happily freed from excessive care and troublous thoughts, how incessant are her cares, how exhausting of time, strength, and spirits, are her duties! She has no resting hours, no holiday seasons, no sabbath leisure: but care, incessant care, is often her lot. Is this the time, and are these the circumstances to which you would postpone the consideration of the high concern of religion? Is it amidst such distractions of thought, and such perturbation of feeling, and such occupancy of time, you would begin the momentous pursuit of salvation, and the sacred duties of religion? Why the real, yea the established and eminent, Christian woman finds it as much as she can do to keep alive her piety amidst so many perplexities and demands. And will you begin it then? These remarks apply to all, even to those who have servants at command, but especially to those who have no such help. Females of the labouring class, how with a mother's duties will you be able to commence a religious life, with your unshared

and unalleviated anxieties? Oh, let me say with an emphasis borrowed from what I have witnessed myself, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." Halcyon season, did you but know it! Improve it while it lasts.

Dwell, my female friends, upon the rich advantages placed by the order of Providence within your reach. Their practical value and tendency are evident in their results. How else shall we account for it that so much larger a number of the disciples of Christ is found among your sex than among the other? It is not, I repeat, that religion, as some say, better suits the weaker intellect. This is a double insult, first of all to religion itself, as if it were adapted only to imbecility, and to you, as if that imbecility were yours. The circumstances I have just stated will account for it, without supposing either that your minds or the proofs of revealed religion are weak. Religion, which is the glory of an archangel, and the very image of God, can never be below the dignity of man, or unworthy the attention of the mightiest intellect. If religion depended upon authority, a thousand times more of lofty intellect has been arrayed on the side of Christianity than has been marshalled against it. In addition to the circumstances mentioned above to account for the prevalence of piety among your sex, I might remark that it would seem as if God had intended it for the greater humiliation of Satan, that as he triumphed over man by woman, so God would triumph over him by woman; that as she was the instrument of his success in the fall, she should be the instrument of his humiliation in redemption; that she who was the first to come under his yoke should be the most eager to throw it off, and thus his trophy be

snatched from his hand, and his boast be rendered nugatory, by the power of Him who came to bruise the serpent's head, and to destroy the works of the devil. But there is another mark of the wisdom of God in this arrangement, which is that as religion is so momentous to the interests of society and the welfare of immortal souls, that sex should be most inclined to it to which is consigned the first formation of the human character.

I will now set before you the benefits which will accrue to you from early piety.

Are the blessings of religion itself nothing? Recollect, piety is not merely the performance of duties, but also the enjoyment of benefits. This is too much forgotten, and the whole business of a holy life is regarded by many in something of the light of penance; or at any rate of a service somewhat rigid and severe. If it were so, it would still be our wisdom to attend to it, since it is the only thing that can prepare us for heaven and eternity. That it is service, is very true; but it is also a state of privilege. It is the service, not of a slave, but of a child; and with the duties of a child, it brings also the privileges of a child. Dwell upon that one thought, a child of God! Can you conceive of anything higher, greater, nobler? Does an angel stand in any higher relation to God? To be able to say in the fullest, richest sense of the language, "Our Father which art in heaven:" to be an object of the love, care, interest, of the one Infinite Being: to be interested in all the privileges of the divine, redeemed, and heavenly family! O, my young friends, is this nothing? Is it not everything? Many of you are orphans, and is it not blissful to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up?" Is it not a blessed

thing to have Him for the guide of your youth? Hear what God says, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." O, hear his voice, accept his invitation, and come into his family. Hence it is we propose religion to you, not simply in the shape of duty but of bliss. Yes. It is another name for happiness: and can you be happy too soon? You want to be happy. You are made for happiness, and are capable of it; and where will you find it? Pleasure saith, "It is not in me;" and knowledge saith, "It is not in me." Rank, fashion, and wealth affirm, "We have heard the fame thereof with our ears." But religion says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the fountain and take of the water of life freely." Universal experience attests that pure and full satisfaction is not to be found for the soul of man in any of the possessions of this world: and if they were satisfying, they are all uncertain; mere unsubstantial shadows, which flit before us, and are lost. You have perhaps formed totally wrong conceptions of religion. "Happiness," you say, "in religion! We can conceive of it as duty, somewhat severe, though incumbent duty; but to speak of religion yielding pleasure, is like supposing the entrance of a ghost would increase the delights of a ball-room!" Yes, I know it is in the imagination, of some of you at least, a spectral form, muffled, sullen, and gloomy; frightening the young by its awful look, petrifying them by its icy touch, and casting over them its gloomy shadow. But you mistake it. It is on the contrary, a seraph from the presence of God, lighting on our orb, clad in robes of celestial beauty, radiant with beams of glory, shedding smiles of joy on this dark scene, and echoing

the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will to men." That ministering spirit meets you, my female friends, just setting out in life, offers to be your guide, protector, and comforter, through all your perilous journey to eternity. Hear her voice as she beckons you to follow her. "If you are in danger I will shield you; if you are desolate I will befriend you; if you are poor I will enrich you; if you are sorrowful I will comfort you; if you are sick I will visit you; in the dangerous walks of life I will protect you; in the agonies of death I will sustain you: and when your spirit quits its clay tabernacle I will conduct you into the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and place you at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore." And will you refuse such a friend? Will you turn away from such bliss? Religion, gloom and melancholy? Yes, if Eden was a gloomy place. Yes, if heaven be a region of sighs and tears. Yes, if saints made perfect and holy angels are clad in sackcloth, and the song of the seraphim is changed into the groan of despair. Oh no, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Her duties are pleasant, her very sorrows are mixed with joys, to say nothing of her privileges. To exhort you, therefore, to be pious, is only in other words to invite you to take your pleasure. A pleasure high, rational, holy, angelical: a pleasure accompanied by no envenomed sting, no subsequent loathing, no remorseful recollections, no bitter farewells, such an one as being honey in the mouth never turns to gall in the stomach. A pleasure made for the soul and the soul for it, adapted to its nature, because suited to its spirituality; adequate to its capacities, because the enjoyment of an infinite good; and

lasting as its duration, because itself eternal. Such a pleasure as grows fresher, instead of becoming wearisome, by enjoyment. A pleasure which a man may truly call his own, because seated in his heart, and carried with him into all places and all circumstances; and therefore neither liable to accident nor exposed to injury. It is the foretaste of heaven and the earnest of eternity. In a word, beginning in grace, it passes into glory and immortality, and those joys which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Perhaps I may suggest, without at all intending to utter a suspicion of your regard to virtue, or a reflection upon your firm attachment to its rules, that you may need religion in youth to protect you from the moral dangers to which even females are exposed. A vicious woman, I have already admitted, is a much rarer character than a vicious man; but still it sometimes occurs. What instances could not the records of some institutions reveal? How many victims of the tempter's wiles could there be found, who would have been preserved from degradation and misery had they been found under the protecting influence of religion when the assault was made upon their purity or honesty! I know that multitudes are kept strictly chaste and upright without religion; but I know that of the numbers which have fallen, not one would have lapsed if they had been living in the fear of God. After Eve's fall from perfect innocence in Paradise, no woman should feel offended by the admonition to be cautious and vigilant: nor suppose that her circumstances, feelings, or principles, place her so far beyond the reach of temptation that her safety is guaranteed with absolute certainty. "Pride

goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." To many a once high-minded woman, proud of her reputation, the taunt has been uttered by the victims of frailty, "Art thou also become weak as we?" "Be not high-minded, then, but fear."

But you need religion for your consolation amidst the sorrows of your lot. If it be truly said of man, that he "is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," it may with greater emphasis be so said of woman. As if in the way of righteous retribution, she who mixed the bitter cup of human woe, is called to drink the deepest of its dregs. Sorrows are apportioned to her sex in common with ours, and there is scarcely an affliction to which humanity is incident to which she is not herself exposed. In addition, how many has she peculiar to herself! The weaker vessel, she is liable to be oppressed by the stronger; and to what an extent is this oppression carried on! How is she trodden down, not only in countries where the protective influence of Christianity is not known, but in this, where it is! To how much greater bodily infirmity is her more delicately wrought and more sensitive frame subjected, than ours! Dwell upon her dependence, and her helplessness in many cases. To me some single friendless women are the very types of desolation. Then think of her privations, her sufferings, cares, and labours as a mother. I admire the patience, contentment, and submission, which enable her to say, "I am a woman," without repining or complaining of the hardness of her lot; for certain it is, that her groans are the loudest in creation. Think not, my young friends, I am scaring you into religion by filling your minds with these gloomy forebodings. By no means; but I am anxious to pre-

pare you by its sweet, soothing, tranquillizing, and alleviating power, to meet a woman's trials with a woman's piety.

Early piety is at once the most secure basis, and the most complete finish, of all female excellence. Look over what is said in a previous chapter on "Woman's Mission," and the virtues and tenderness that qualify her to fulfil it, and think what a support to all these is furnished by sincere piety. The surest basis of all moral excellence will be found in it. What is so productive of humility, of meekness and gentleness, of contentment and submission, and of self-denial and fortitude? In what soil will these mild and yet heroic dispositions grow and flourish so luxuriantly as in that of piety? We have stated that woman is created to love and be loved. To love is natural to her: and what cherishes this state of mind like religion, which, both in its doctrines and duties, is one bright and glorious manifestation of love to the universe? To all these varied excellences religion adds the firmness and consistency of principle, and the power and government of conscience, and takes them out of the region of mere taste. And what a holy and ineffable loveliness does it throw over the female character? Beauty is woman's attribute, and her form is the most perfect type of exquisite symmetry to be found in the whole material universe. And if woman's form be the finest specimen of material beauty, woman's piety is the most attractive instance of moral beauty. Who can look upon any well-executed pictorial representation of it without admiration? Where does woman look so altogether lovely as when seen lifting the eye of devotion to heaven; that eye which expresses the mingled emo-

tions of faith, hope, and love? The Church of Rome has known the power of this, and has maintained its dominion in some measure over its votaries, by the power of the painter's art in depicting female beauty associated with female piety. In a religious female, the beauty of heaven and earth combines: the graces of the seraph and those of the daughters of Adam are united: just as in a holy man the sublimer grandeur of mortals and immortals is found associated. Yet, notwithstanding all this, many of you are not pious. Do consider what a chasm in excellence remains to be filled up, what a defect to be supplied, while religion is wanting in the female character. There are few men, however irreligious, but would shrink from impiety in a woman: it involves a coldness and hardness of character offensive both to taste and feeling. "Even when infidelity was more in vogue than at present, when it had almost monopolized talent, and identified itself with enlightened sentiment, the few women who volunteered under its banner were treated with the contempt they deserved. The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the 'Rights of Woman;' and no one sympathised with her in her defeat. And depend upon it, whatever other female follows Mary Wolstencroft, and essays the emancipation of her sex from the obligations of piety, will, like her, be consigned to abhorrence by the verdict of society. The mere suspicion of irreligion lowers a woman in general esteem. Religion is indeed woman's panoply, and no one who wishes her happiness would divest her of it; no one who appreciates her virtues, would weaken their best security."*

* Woman, in her Social and Domestic Character, by Mrs John Sandford.

What is it, then, that prevents your giving to the subject of religion that attention which its infinite and eternal importance demands and deserves? Let me ask you with a beseeching importunity, as the apostle did the Galatians, "Who (or what) did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" Ah! what? Let me speak to you of the hindrances that are in the way of your obtaining life eternal. Hindrances! Should aught but absolute impossibilities prevent you? It is not infidelity? No. You are not infidels. You shudder at the idea. A female infidel is a character as rare as it is odious. Nor is it absolute irreligion, but the negative character of no religion that we have most to complain of. Not of direct opposition to its claims, but the neglect of them for other things. It is a guilty apathy to the most momentous subject in the universe; a careless indifference to the most valuable interests of time and eternity; a fatal oblivion of all that belongs to another world, which we regret; a contentment with things seen and temporal, without any solicitude about things unseen and eternal, which we deplore. Your minds are pre-occupied. You are taken up with other things, and say to religion when it appeals to you, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." There is, I know, a repugnance to true, spiritual, vital, earnest piety, which is the natural working of an unrenewed heart. You can observe the Sabbath day forms of godliness, by attending the house of God; but even this is more from custom than from choice, a kind of weekly compromise with piety, that you may for so much Sabbath occupation, be left to yourselves and other pursuits all the rest of the week. Your religion is nothing more than a

Sunday dress, worn for the place and the season. But this is not religion, but merely a substitute and an apology for it.

Some of you are bent upon present worldly enjoyment. The apostle has described your taste and your pursuits where he says, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Ponder that description. Does it not startle you; horrify you? Lovers of parties, of the dance and the song, of the gay scene and frivolous discourse, more than God! Just look at this thought in all its naked deformity. A ball, a concert, a rout, a party, loved more than God! Not to love God at all for higher objects than these; for science, literature, fame, rank, wealth, is a dreadful state of mind; but to neglect and despise God for scenes of frivolity, mirth, and conviviality, is it not shocking? Did you ever yet seriously reflect thus? "What a soul I must have that can love pleasure, but cannot love God!" Consider what will this taste for pleasure do for you in the hour of sickness, in the scenes of poverty, in the season of calamity, and in the agonies of death?

In the case of some of those who possess a more than ordinary degree of personal attraction, the consciousness of beauty fills the mind with self-complacency, and constant thirst for the admiration and attention of others. No really elegant woman can be ignorant of her natural accomplishments: and too rarely is a beautiful mind the lovely tenant of a beautiful body. What an odious spectacle is presented when mind and matter are thus exhibited in contrast. What beauty can be compared with that of the soul, and what beauty of the soul can be compared with holiness? This is the beauty of angels, yea, of God himself. How foolish is it to be

vain of that which a cutaneous eruption may turn into loathsome deformity, and which, if sickness do not destroy it at once, advancing age must obliterate, and the grave consume. Many a woman, even in this world, has had to rue the posession of a captivating face or form, and to deplore it for ever in the world to come. Beauty has lost body and soul, character and happiness, in thousands of instances.

Vanity displays itself also in attention to personal decoration, even where there is no pretension to beauty, and not unfrequently attempts to supply the want of it. How many are a thousand times more concerned about jewellery than religion, the pearl of great price ; and about millinery than about the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation. A love of dress is not only a foible and a fault, but almost a sin, and in innumerable cases has led to confirmed vice. Is it not lamentable to conceive of a rational and immortal being spending her time and exhausting her solicitude in adorning her body, and caring nothing about the ornaments of her soul : thinking only how she shall appear in the eyes of man, and caring nothing how she shall appear in the sight of God. With this is too often associated a levity and a frivolity of disposition which are the very opposite to that seriousness and sobriety of mind, which a real regard to spiritual religion requires. There is no sin in cheerfulness, no piety in gloom. Religion is the happiest thing in the world, for it is in fact the beginning of heaven upon earth. Religion gives a peace that passes all understanding, and yields a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; so that I wish you to understand, my young friends, I do not require you in becoming Christians to take the veil, cut off

your tresses, put aside every elegant dress, part with your smiles, and clothe yourself like a spectre in the gloom, and sullen silence of the convent. But religion is still a serious thing, a thing that deals with God, salvation, heaven, eternity. And surely the frivolity and the levity that can do nothing but laugh, and rattle, and court attention by studied airs, empty loquacity, and personal display, are utterly incompatible with that dignified and chastened (yet by no means formal, much less gloomy), sobriety of mind which religion requires.

Companionship hinders many from giving their attention to this momentous subject. They are surrounded by associates who have no taste for religion : and they have perhaps formed a still closer friendship with some one or more who unhappily do not conceal their distaste for this high and holy concern. From the spell of such a circle, it is difficult indeed to break away. It has been thought and said by some, that the influence of companionship both for good and for evil, is greater with women than with the other sex ; on the ground that there is less of robust independence and of self-reliance in woman than in man. If so, how much does it become every female to take care what companions she selects ! How difficult it is to oppose the spirit and conduct of those with whom we act ! Generally speaking, we must conform to them or give up their friendship. Even if a solicitude about religion is in some degree awakened, it will soon be checked and extinguished in the society of those who have no sympathy with such anxiety. Shall the dearest friends you have on earth keep you from salvation ? Will you sacrifice your soul, your immortal soul, at the shrine of friendship ? Will you refuse to go to heaven because

others will not accompany you : and will you go with them to perdition rather than part company on earth ? Will you carry your friendship so far as to be willing to be friends even in the bottomless pit ?

You are perhaps prejudiced against religion by the conduct of some of its professors. And it may be that some of your own age and sex are included in the number. I am sorry there is any ground for this. I admit that much you see in many of them has but little in it to recommend religion to your favour. But all this was foretold by Christ, must be expected as human nature is, and ought not to be allowed to prejudice your minds against piety. If you saw a number of persons under a course of medical treatment which required them to observe a particular regimen, but which they constantly violated, and were of course no better for the medicines they took, you would not reject the system because it did not cure them. Just so it is with religion. These persons, though they profess to be under it, are constantly violating its rules, and are no better than those who do not profess it. But is this a valid reason for rejecting the system ? You are to try religion by its own nature, as set forth in the Bible, and not by the conduct of its professors. If your soul should be lost, it will be no excuse before the bar of God, nor any comfort to yourselves in the world of despair, that you suffered your mind to be prejudiced against religion by the misconduct of some who professed it.

And now, in conclusion of this chapter, let me, young women, conjure you at the outset of life to consider the great end and purpose for which, as regards yourselves, your great Creator placed you in this world. Think not too highly of yourselves, for you are sinners

as well as others, and need, and may obtain, the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory. Think not too meanly of yourselves, for you are immortal creatures, and may inherit everlasting life. Rise to the true dignity of your nature by rising into the region of true religion. Consume not your life in pursuits, innocent it may be, but frivolous and unworthy of your powers, your destiny, and your duty. With a clear and right understanding of your mission as regards this world, connect as clear a perception of your mission as regards the world to come. Behold an existence opening before you, which you may fill with the sanctity, bliss, and honour of a Christian, as well as with all the virtues of a woman. Withdraw your heart from vanity, and consecrate it to piety. Give the morning of your day to God, and then whether it be long or short, whether it be passed in wedded or in single life, whether it be bright with the sun of prosperity, or dark with the clouds, and stormy with the winds, of adversity; if it shall close suddenly by one of those visitations to which your sex is peculiarly exposed; or if it shall include a long and gloomy evening, it shall usher in for your happy spirit, delivered from the burden of the flesh, that cloudless and eternal morning to which there shall be no night. Then shall it be found that the chief end of woman, as well as man, was to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGIOUS ZEAL.

PHILIPPIANS iv, 3.

Those women which laboured with me in the Gospel.

THE subject of this chapter harmonises with the scenes which we often witness in the metropolis of our country, I mean the missionary and other religious meetings, which are held annually in that great centre of the world's family. The month of May is wisely selected for the time of holding the anniversaries of these organizations of Christian zeal. Then, when the principle of fertility, after the dreariness of another winter, is flowing in a thousand channels, and when all nature in this country is verdant and blossoms with the hopes of another year, it is well for the church of Christ to exhibit those institutions which are, in the moral world, the vernal signs of retiring frosts and approaching summer. It is a glorious sight to behold the trooping multitudes hastening with willing feet and joyful countenances, and beating hearts, to the place of convocation, and blending all the joys of friendly greetings with all the sublimer delights of Christian zeal. We feel called upon there to bless God, not only

that we live in a world which he has visited in mercy by the person and work of his incarnate Son, but in an age and country in which so much is done for the spread of the knowledge of this great fact to the ends of the earth. At these meetings all is matter of delight. The crowded platforms, containing the pastors, deacons, and members of our churches, who have connected themselves with the Missionary Society; the presence of missionaries from the fields of holy labour; the eloquent addresses of the speakers; the vast crowd of listening hearers, the thunders of eloquence reverberated in other thunders of applause; all, all, are calculated to make one feel how happy an exchange we have made in giving up the pleasures of sin and the world for those of religion. But there is one other sight on these occasions which is as delightful as it is common; and that is the number of women, and especially of young women, that are always present: thus reminding us how deep an interest they have in these proceedings, and how large a share they bear in them. And indeed, without going to the metropolis in the month of May, or witnessing the scenes of Exeter Hall, what public meeting for any religious object is ever held in our own, or any other town, of which women do not form by far the larger portion? But I do not adopt the world's vocabulary and talk of the beautiful and elegantly dressed females who are there, I would rather speak of "the holy women," like one apostle, and refer to them as another apostle does, as "those women which labour in the gospel."

Let us attend to what the passage at the head of the chapter says, "Help those women that laboured with me in the gospel." Then women may labour in the

gospel, for they did so in apostolic times, and received the commendation of the apostle for it. If they did then, they may now; and if they may, they ought. Hard would be woman's lot, bitter her privation, and degraded her condition, if on account of her sex she was excluded from all participation, beyond her own personal religion, in the sublimest enterprise in the universe. She might well deplore her misfortune, if while man was permitted the exercise of religious zeal, she was denied all service at the altar of God. "Even heathenism," she would mournfully exclaim, "honoured our sex, as it was represented by the Vestals, to whose vigilance was committed the guardianship of the sacred fire; and also by its priestesses, to whose inspiration was entrusted the responses of the oracles. And does the religion of Jesus exclude us?" No, it does not, and I refer you back to the first two chapters for proof that it does not; and I call your attention in the present one to learn how you may avail yourselves of the honour placed within your reach, and discharge the obligations which you are under to promote the interests of religion in this dark, disordered world.

To be useful in the cause of God! How noble, how vast, how sublime, how godlike an idea! Dwell for a moment upon it. Did you ever weigh the import of that very common, but very delightful word, usefulness? Did you ever ponder in sober seriousness of thought the kindred phrase, "To be useful?" Have you never had your admiration excited by hearing it said of any one, "She is a useful woman?" I cannot let you read another syllable till I have endeavoured to fascinate you if possible by the beauty, and to captivate you by the force, of that glorious word, usefulness. Look

at its opposite, uselessness. How low, and dull, and mean a sound; and how despicable the character it represents! A rational, social, and immortal being, useless: doing no good, carrying on no benevolent activity, exerting no beneficial influence: a worthless weed, and not a flower; a pebble, and not a gem, a piece of dead wood floating down the stream, instead of a living fruit tree growing on its bank! Yes, worse than all these, for the weeds, stones, and wood may be converted to some good purpose; but to what purpose can one who does no good be turned, except it be to serve as a warning to others? Let your young hearts, then, beat with a desire to do good. Aspire to the honour of doing good. Contract not, shrivel not, into a despicable selfishness. Cherish a yearning after benevolent activity, and feel as if it were but half-living to live only for yourselves.

In this cause I want you to be even zealous. The apostle says, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Zeal, as you know, means an earnest, ardent desire, giving rise to a correspondent energy of action, to obtain some favourite object; and when directed to a right object is a noble and elevated state of mind. It is, however, a state of mind that requires great caution in its exercise, especially in the young, and most of all in young females. It is like fire, which may be applied to many useful purposes when under wise direction, but which if not kept in its proper place and under proper restraint may cause a conflagration. Or to change the illustration, it may be only as the healthful vital heat which keeps the body in comfort and in action, or it may become a fever of the soul, to consume its strength and destroy its life. Or, to ven-

ture, for the sake of emphasis, even upon a third comparison, many a zealous mind is set on fire by the speed of its own action, and for want of some regulator to check its speed, and some lubricator to lessen its friction, bursts into a flame and consumes the whole machine, and does mischief to others as well as to itself. A warm heart requires a cool judgment to prevent these consequences from a misguided zeal. The female mind being so susceptible, is far more liable to incautious action than that of the other sex, and is less disposed to reflection. In man the judgment more generally keeps the heart in check till it is itself enlightened and convinced. In woman the heart is often engaged before the judgment; and hence the danger of female zeal being sometimes wrong in its object, excessive in its degree, and impetuous in its action. Almost all new theories, whether relating to medicine, theology, or any other practical matters, find favour first of all chiefly with women. Too often led more by their feelings than by their reason, they get entangled, like their first mother, by appeals to their passions and affections, and allow their hearts to lead astray their judgment. The Greek philosophers classed zeal under three heads, the zeal of envy, the zeal of emulation, and the zeal of piety. Extinguish all feelings of the first, as so many sparks thrown off from a flame kindled by the fire of the bottomless pit. Have very little to do with the second beyond an unenvious imitation of what is good; and let the third be put under the guardianship of a sound judgment, and the guidance of the Holy Scripture.

I will first of all advert to the objects of your zealous activity. You dwell in a vale of tears, and amidst the

groans of creation, occasioned by poverty, disease, misfortune, and death, and are not to be insensible to the sights and sounds of affliction by which you are surrounded. The female heart is supposed to be the very dwelling-place of mercy, and an unfeeling woman is a libel upon her sex: formed by nature to weep with those that weep, and to minister to the bodily woes of humanity, she should enter into the design of Providence, and become a ministering angel in the chamber of sickness. You have seen those cloaked and demure women who issue from conventual establishments on errands of mercy to the abodes of sickness and poverty, deeming no office too menial, no service too self-denying, which can alleviate the pains, or promote the comfort, of the sufferer. We would not question the purity of their motives, or the tenderness of the offices which they perform for the children of want and woe; but they look, after all, like a device of the church which employs them, to obtrude itself on public notice and to win converts to itself. We call upon you, without cutting the ties of your connection with society and abjuring the characters of wives and mothers, to be our Sisters of Mercy, and to make it your business and your pleasure to visit the scenes of sickness and the abodes of poverty. Even in youth, acquire the habits, the tenderness, the delicate tact, of a nurse. Loathe that spurious sentimentality which can weep over the imaginary woes of a novel, but turns away, either with a callous or a coward heart, from the real sufferings which abound on every hand.

But I now more particularly refer to zeal for religion, or for matters connected with it. Religion is every one's business, not only as regards the pos-

session and practice of it as a personal concern, but also as regards its diffusion. Every one can not only be truly pious, but, by the blessing of God, can do something to make others so. To spread religion in our world is not merely the work and duty of its ministers, but of all without exception, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, male or female. Every one who understands the nature, feels the influence, and values the privileges, of the gospel of Christ, can do something to bring others into the same happy condition. Where there is no desire and no effort to do this, there can be no real piety. Those who have no concern for the salvation of others have no right to conclude they are in a state of salvation themselves. There is room, and opportunity, and obligation, for all to work in this cause. Even children can do something here, and have done it. A little girl being deeply affected by the notorious violation of the Sabbath in the neighbourhood where she lived, by the number of shops open on the Lord's day, went to her minister and solicited some tracts on the subject, and enclosing them in envelopes, she took them round and modestly left them at the different houses without saying a word. And as the result of this humble and unostentatious effort, seven shops from that time were closed on the Sabbath. God sometimes employs the humblest instruments for accomplishing great puposes, as I observed when remarking upon the conduct of the little Hebrew maid in Naaman's family. Paganism teaches us something here; for what said Jehovah to the prophet when referring to the heathen practices which the Jews had imitated? "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and

the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods." What a busy scene, all minds engaged, all hands employed, men, women, and children! Let us be instructed by this bad example, and show a zeal for the true God equal to that which the apostate Jews did for false ones. Christianity can find work for women and children as well as Paganism; and how solemn are the obligations to propagate it which it imposes on all who profess it!

As no service can be well performed by those who are not qualified for it, I will here enumerate the chief pre-requisites for a course of female activity in the cause of religion.

Religious zeal should in every case be the offspring of personal piety. Without this there can be no intelligent, well-sustained, or very efficient effort. Something no doubt may be accomplished without it. God may make use of labours which were not directed to his glory. But it is only the truly pious mind that can understand the object of religious zeal, be actuated by right motives, and be likely long to continue the work, or to bring down the blessing of God upon what is done. Your own heart must be right with God or you will know little about the way of making others so. Example must support exhortation, or the latter will have little effect. Much of the effort of the present day is sadly wanting in devout seriousness, spiritual earnestness, and holy solemnity. It is a bustling, prayerless, unsanctified activity. There is, in too many, a frivolity about it that looks as if those who are engaged in it know not or forget that they are doing the work of the Lord: all is so light and trifling that it is evident in this

case zeal is only another species of amusement. The zeal that is likely to be continuous, to honour God, to do good to our fellow-creatures, is that which is cherished in the closet of devotion, fed by the oil of Scripture, and fanned by the breath of prayer. There is upon the minds of those who manifest it "that awe which warns them how they touch a holy thing."

Religious knowledge is essential to well-directed efforts to do good. I now more particularly refer to a knowledge of the object to be accomplished, and of the means of accomplishing it. A young person anxious to do spiritual good should well understand three great principles in religion, the ruin of human nature by sin, its redemption by Christ, and its regeneration by the Spirit: and should consider that all efforts of zeal must be directed to the accomplishment of the two latter. To fit her for this work, she should study well the Word of God, read some of the many treatises on the subject of religion with which the press teems, and make herself acquainted with some of the best tracts and books for putting into the hands of those who become anxious about religion.

An intense and longing desire to be useful must lie at the bottom of all her efforts. It is not a mere love of activity, a taste for social union and occupation, a desire for power and influence over others, an ambition for distinction, which are the impulsive causes of religious activity; but a tender pity for the immortal souls of our fellow-creatures, and an earnest solicitude for their salvation, coupled with an enlightened and fervent zeal for the glory of God. It is that piety which melted the heart of David when he said, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law;" which

agitated the soul of Paul, when amidst the splendours of Athenian architecture and sculpture, he was insensible to all the glory that surrounded him, in consequence of the sin with which it was associated, and felt his spirit moved within him at seeing the city "wholly given to idolatry;" and which, indeed, is taught in the first three petitions of our Lord's prayer: "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Understand, my young friends, then, what you have to do; not the work of a low and narrow sectarianism, in proselyting persons from one denomination to another, nothing resembling the operations of female Jesuitism, nothing of zeal to establish one denomination upon the ruins of another: no, but the nobler and holier work of saving the souls of your fellow-creatures, especially those of your own sex, from the dominion of sin here, and from "the wrath to come" hereafter. Begin life with an abhorrence of bigotry, and never let your zeal degenerate into the meanness and malignity of that earth-born spirit; let it be a fire kindled by a coal taken by the seraphim from the altar of God, and not a flame lighted by a spark from the bottomless pit. Be it your aim to spread that religion which consists not in forms of government and religious ceremonies, but in faith in Christ, love to God, and love to man. To accomplish this, let there be a real engagement of your heart. Give up your soul to a passion for being useful. Cherish the most expansive benevolence. Feel as if you did not understand, or secure, or enjoy, the end of life, unless you lived to be useful. Account usefulness the charm of existence, the sugar that sweetens the cup of life. Ever feel as if you heard a voice saying to you, "Do something; do

it at once: do it heartily: do good, this good, good to the soul."

A habit of self-denial is essential to the exercise of religious zeal and Christian benevolence. Our Lord said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." This is true of the way of holiness, but it is especially so of that of benevolent activity. Christ could do us no good without his cross: nor can we do others much good without ours. We would not deceive you, and endeavour to lure you into the career of holy activity by representing it as leading through a garden of Eden where all is blooming and beautiful, ease and enjoyment. No such thing. The course of religious zeal is often in a wilderness, over sharp stones and bare rocks, and amidst thorns and nettles. You must make sacrifices of time, ease, enjoyment, feeling, perhaps of friendship; you must bear hardships, and encounter many disagreeable things: you must be prepared to give up self-will, pertinacity, claims to pre-eminence. Can you be zealous of good works on such terms? If so, come on; if not, go back; for the career of mercy is not for such tender feet as yours to tread. But, my young friends, can you allow yourselves to sink into such effeminacy and feebleness of character? Can you be content to degenerate into littleness, and pass through life as a species of nonentity, because you cannot endure noble self-denial? I do not appeal to your love of romance. I would not set your imagination on fire, in order that you may offer up yourselves a burnt offering to benevolence, in the flames of enthusiasm. I do not stimulate you to become heroines of mercy, and to set all the comforts of life at defiance. There are some

who love the adventures of a career of active mercy. There may be romance in everything, even in pity. I want not this, but I do want to see young women practising a sober self-denial, a judicious disregard of ease and comfort, in order to do good. Unite a masculine hardihood of endurance with a feminine tenderness of feeling and delicacy of manner. Passive fortitude belongs to you.

Patience is another qualification for doing good. They that would accomplish this must not be "weary in well-doing." There are many things to make them so, the neglect of others, opposition, disappointment, ingratitude, perhaps censure. Those who expect to benefit their fellow-creatures with as much ease and as speedily as some do them injury, had better not make the attempt, for they are sure to fail. Scarcely any people in the world have more need of patience than those who set themselves to instruct the ignorance, to relieve the wants, to alleviate the sorrows, and to reform the vices, of their fellow-creatures. See how this was illustrated in the history of our Lord. Consider how his benevolence was ever resisted by the malignity of those whom he sought to benefit. He lavished upon them his mercy, and it was equalled by their ingratitude. They refused his offers, rejected his invitations, misrepresented his actions, disbelieved his words, and misconstrued his motives. Never was so much goodness met by so much envenomed opposition. Yet behold his patience. A thousandth part of the opposition which he met with would have exhausted the forbearance of an archangel; and yet "he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;" gave them his tears when they had refused his miracles; shed for

them his blood when they despised his tears; and bade his disciples to make to them the first proclamation of his grace, when they had even scoffed at his death. Study the history of Christ, my young friends, for the purpose of seeing an example for you to imitate in the career of mercy. Follow him who "went about doing good," in order to teach you with what patience you should go and do likewise. Many who are all ardour at starting, soon grow tired, because they do not find the course easy, and reach the goal at a bound, or are opposed in the way. It is a despicable as well as pitiable sight, to behold a young person entering into the work of benevolence as confident and eager as if she would surpass all others, and then almost at the first stage, when the novelty is over, and difficulties arise, and the expected flowers do not appear in the path, giving all up, and turning back to indolence, ease, and uselessness. On the contrary, it is a sight on which angels and God himself look down with delight, to see another holding on her way in her humble career of benevolence, amidst disappointment and opposition, persevering in her attempts to do good, and finding in the consciousness of her aims and motives, and her knowledge of the excellence of her object, a sufficient inducement to persevere, though at present she reaps little else but discouragement and defeat.

A spirit of dependence upon God for success, united with a high sense of the importance and necessity of human effort, is essential to religious zeal. This gives a twofold boldness of mind, and firmness of step; and makes us strong, not only as instruments, in ourselves, but also in the Lord and in the power of his might. What courage is derived in the career of benevolence

from such a consideration as this: "I know I am seeking a good object by right means, and I will go in the strength of the Lord!" Young women, even in your humble sphere and feeble efforts to do good, a spirit of believing prayer, (which indeed is the spirit in which everything should be done,) will bring the God of angels to your help, the Lord of Hosts to your aid. Go forth with the consciousness that you are doing right, and with a belief that Omnipotence is by your side. It does not betoken pride nor self-conceit, but only that proper sense of capability which every one should cherish, to say, "I feel I am something, and can do something; I need not be a cipher, for God has not made me one. I have a mind, and heart, and will, and tongue, and with these I may do something for God and my fellow-creatures. Others of my own age and sex, feeble and humble as I am, have done something, and so may I, and by God's help and blessing, I will." You are right; it is all true. This is self-knowledge, and right self-esteem. Cherish these thoughts; act upon them, and you will do something. With such qualifications you may go to the work of religious zeal.

Permit me now to point out to you the ways in which your zeal may be employed appropriately to your sex, age, and circumstances. "As we have opportunity," said the apostle, "let us do good." Opportunities are more precious than rubies, and should never be lost by neglect. There are three things which, if lost, can never be recovered: time, the soul, and an opportunity. And it is of importance for you to ponder this. It becomes us all to remember the advice of the sage to his disciples, "Be mindful of opportunities." Youth is your opportunity for doing

good; not indeed if you live, your only one, but it is a very precious one. The remarks made in the last chapter on the subject of the leisure afforded by your present situation for the cultivation of piety, apply with equal force to the opportunities it affords for usefulness. In married life, with a family around you, and all the cares it brings with it, you will have comparatively little opportunity, at least for some of those activities which you can now carry forward.

Among the ways in which female activity could be appropriately carried on, I must begin of course with the education of children in our Sunday Schools. The instruction of the girls is entrusted to females, and what an honour is thus assigned to them! It is passing strange how any young woman pretending to religion can satisfy herself that she is doing all she can, or all she ought, for God's glory and the good of her fellow-creatures, who is not devoting her youthful energies to this blessed work. And yet it is painful to observe how many of the young women of the more respectable families of our congregations, withhold their services from this useful and valuable sphere of female activity. I am not unaware of some difficulties and objections to this engagement for her daughters, which present themselves to the mind of a careful, judicious, and anxious mother. But surely the proper exercise of maternal influence and authority would, in most cases, be sufficient to counterbalance those contingent evils to which the mixed society of the Sunday-school community might expose young females, I mean in the way of forming acquaintances and unsuitable connections. A well-taught and wisely-trained girl will know, and ought to know, how to avoid general and undesirable

familiarity, without being suspected of haughty disdain or proud neglect of those who are not upon her level in the ranks of social life. It does require care, I admit, but care will be sufficient to avoid the evils alluded to. And I freely confess that the frequent and mixed meetings of teachers of both sexes which are held in some schools, are by no means necessary for the good working of the system, and are very undesirable on other accounts; and it is not to be wondered at, that for this reason, many mothers do not allow their daughters to become teachers, and that daughters themselves do not wish to engage in the work. Acquaintances, by no means suitable, have, no doubt, in some cases been formed. It is therefore incumbent upon all who are thus engaged to be anxiously watchful that no part of their conduct give to those who seek it, occasion to speak ill of the effect of Sunday-school teaching upon the character and conduct of the females who devote themselves to it.

District-visiting Societies and benevolent institutions for affording temporal relief and spiritual instruction to the sick poor, conducted by female agency, are become very common both in the Church of England and among Dissenters. It would not be desirable, of course, that these should be chiefly conducted by young women. Matronly age, experience, and weight, are necessary to give propriety and effect to such a labour of love, but surely there is no impropriety in associating even in these good works, a youthful female with an elderly one.

The Bible and Missionary Societies, and other religious institutions, have called into operation a large number of females who are employed in collecting money for those important organizations, and for supply-

ing the poor with copies of the word of God. There can be no objection to this, provided the more youthful portion of the sex so employed be associated with those who are older, and also that very young girls be not employed at all in the work. Nothing can be more repugnant to my sense of propriety, than for young females to be sent out with what are called "collecting cards," to wander over a town knocking at the doors of anybody and everybody for the purpose of begging money, and sometimes even entering counting-houses, and assailing young men with their importunities.

The distribution of religious tracts is another line of female activity in which many may be eminently useful. This is a means of doing good universally characteristic of the age. The press was never so active either for good or for evil as it is now. Its productions are instruments which every hand can wield, not excepting that of a young and even comparatively illiterate female. But the same caution must be here applied also, that nothing be done to break down the barriers of female modesty.

Perhaps it will be thought I ought not to overlook one line of female usefulness peculiar to the sex, and especially to the youthful portion of it, and that is, furnishing articles of the pencil and needle, the products of which when sold shall go to the support of the cause of Christ. There is one way of doing this, about which I confess I have serious doubt; I mean the modern practice of bazaars, or as they are now called, "Fancy Sales." I am aware of all the arguments that are employed in favour of them, such as their gainfulness, and their calling forth contributions from those who would give or could give in no other way. A very

beautiful little tract, entitled "The Bazaar," was published two years ago, in which the writer, not without a show of argument, endeavoured to prove that these means for the support of religion hardly comport with the sanctity of the object. A certain air of frivolity and worldliness at these sales is thrown over the whole; so that such a scene looks like piety keeping a stall at "Vanity Fair." "Recall," says this writer, "the scene itself, the gay dress, the music and the raffle, flattery and compliment instead of truth. Purchases made from regard to man, and not free-will offerings to God. Mortification and disappointment in place of the approving consciousness of her who 'had done what she could.' Skill exercised in making that which is worthless pass for much. Arts practised, advantages taken, with the excuse that it is for a religious purpose, that would be thought dishonourable in the common business transactions of the world. Then follows ennui after excitement; the gaze at the heap of left things to be disposed of, or that will do for other bazaars, with the false estimate of the result of this. There is another fact in the history of such sales; some who shun the ball-room and the concert, and never entered a theatre, act there the shop-woman, talk the nonsense befitting the bazaar-room, and are as worldly, vain, and foolish, as she who seldom dreams of anything but pleasure, earth, and time."

Now this, I admit, is rather severe, and is perhaps a little exaggerated. Still there is much truth in it, and it may serve as a corrective, if it should not as a dissuasive. To the pure, all things are pure, and there may be those who can enter, pass through, and leave such scenes, without receiving the smallest injury to the

devout and happy seriousness of their religious character. At any rate it is coming near "the appearance of evil," and should excite caution and prayer on the part of those who consider the matter as innocent and therefore lawful. Bazaars, however, are not the only way in which the needle is employed by pious females for works of charity. Working parties are very common: one meets periodically in my vestry, at which articles of utility are made and shipped for sale in India, the produce of which, amounting sometimes for one year's labour to eighty pounds, is devoted to the support of orphan schools connected with our missionary stations abroad. At these meetings, piety, friendship, and zeal, all blend their feelings of enjoyment, and furnish happy seasons for those who attend them.

I knew a most accomplished woman, long since in heaven, who was called by grace out of the gay world, and who after her conversion felt an irresistible desire to do something for the spiritual welfare of her fellow-creatures and the glory of God: but her means were more limited than her aspirations. She thoroughly understood the science of music, and her most exquisite singing had been the delight of gay and fashionable circles. Her taste in drawing and painting was equal to her skill in music. After her conversion to God she turned these accomplishments to the purpose of glorifying God, "who doth instruct man to discretion," by setting some of the most admired Italian and German airs to sacred words, and painting Scripture subjects, and selling the music and pictures in the circle of her friends, often for large sums, especially the paintings, and consecrating all, like the woman who broke her alabaster box of ointment, to the honour of the Saviour

whom she intensely loved. Perhaps there may range over these pages the eye of some similarly gifted woman, with a heart for Christ and his cause, but with as scanty property to serve him, as the female above alluded to; to her I would say, "Go thou and do likewise."

Is there not one way in which young females, unable to do much in producing tasteful works, may be occupied in doing good for God and their fellow-creatures, without in the smallest degree violating the rule of decorum or infringing on the delicacy of female modesty, I mean visiting the chamber of sickness, or the cottage of poverty, to read to the invalid or the ignorant of their own sex, the Word of God and religious tracts? Surely it is no invasion of either the rights of man or the duties of the minister, for a pious modest female, though young, (of course I do not mean a child,) to go to the bedside of a sufferer, and pour into her ears the words, and into her heart the sacred truths, of that precious volume, which is the best balm for a wounded spirit, and the only consolation for a broken heart. Nor can it be improper for her to take her chair by the side of a poor mother who, while she is plying her needle, or watching the cradle, is ready to hear words whereby she may be saved. What a field of usefulness, almost unoccupied, is here opened to the ambition and the energies of our pious young women who have leisure for such occupation! How many thousands of women of the labouring classes are there in every large town, who are so occupied by the cares of their families and the demands of their husbands, as never to join the public assemblies for worship, or to hear the joyful sound of the sermon, or the psalm, who would hail as a ministering angel a female coming to their scene of constant monotonous care and labour,

and causing their dreary abode to echo with the music that tells of a present salvation even for them, and of a land hereafter where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest." Oh ye "devout women, not a few," if ye have hearts of pity for the poor; or compassion for the souls that are likely to be lost amidst their "being careful and troubled about many things and their much serving;" or if ye have any zeal for the glory of God, do, do, employ your leisure hours in paying these visits of mercy to the houses of poverty, ignorance, sickness, and misery. Here there can be nothing in opposition to female modesty, nothing that can minister to female vanity. The seclusion of the scene prevents all this: no rude or inquisitive gaze follows a young woman there; no language of fulsome compliment or sickly adulation is addressed to her there; she is alone with sorrow, or witnessed only by her conscience and her God. Oh, what compared with a young female so occupied is the most elegant and beautiful woman glittering in the gay scene of fashionable folly, the admiration of many eyes and the envy of more? What is all the adulation poured by the lip of flattery into the ear of beauty, compared with the blessing of her that was ready to perish, so gratefully bestowed on that sister of mercy, who had thus "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Companionship affords a means of usefulness of which you ought not to be slow in availing yourself. It may be you have formed friendships in the days of your thoughtlessness with some as thoughtless as yourselves. But you have been awakened to solemn and holy reflection. You have through the work of divine grace passed from death unto life; but your friends still remain

under the power of the world and far from God. Here then is a most legitimate object of pious zeal, to seek by all affectionate and judicious means their conversion to Christ. What an honour and felicity would it be, should you be the means of saving the soul of your companion! How close and tender would be your friendship from that hour, when the tie of affection was doubled and sanctified by the bond of religion! How happy would be your intercourse, how sweet your communion! A covenant is made between you which will go with you to heaven; for all friendships formed on the basis of religion will last for ever. Take with you then if you can, to that happy world, the friend of your heart, there to renew, perfect, and perpetuate the intercourse which you have commenced on earth, and realise the idea that the closest and happiest friendship commenced below is but the bud, and scarcely even that, which will blossom with amaranthine freshness through eternity in heaven.

Women's talent for a flowing easy tender style of correspondence is generally acknowledged; and ought they not to employ this as a means for serving God and their fellow-creatures? How many have been thus led to an acquaintance with religion. There is a great moral power in a well-written religious letter. It is known and felt to be an effusion of love from one heart to another. It is read alone, when no one is a witness of the effect. There is not the reproving or monitory presence of the writer. There is no disposition to feel offended and to resent the intrusive advice or warning. Young women, employ your pen and let your affection in this manner breathe from your letters.

I shall now lay down some rules for the direction

of female activity, which must be very rigidly observed in order to prevent it from doing harm in one way as well as good in another.

The zeal of young women must ever be exercised with the strictest regard to the modesty of youth, and especially of youthful females. It must never be forgotten that bashfulness is the beauty of female character: like the violet, which seems to court seclusion, and indicates its retreat only by its fragrance, retiringness in her adds to her attractions. Anything that would destroy this; that would strip off this delicate veil of modesty, and make her bold and obtrusive; that would thrust her by the impulsive ambition of her own mind upon the public notice, instead of being sought out for usefulness; that would make her clamorous in her complaints of neglect, and imperious in her demands for employment; would inflict an irreparable injury on society by depriving her of that passive power of gentleness by which her influence can be most effectually exerted in society. I confess that with all my desires for female activity within its proper sphere, and the legitimate exercise of woman's zeal, the extent to which in the active spirit of the age, the sex is employed, makes me not a little jealous for the delicate beauties and excellences of the female character. Money might flow into the treasury of our societies, and numbers might be added to their friends, spirit might be given to our operations, and the triumphs of the cause might seem to be multiplied, but if any injury were sustained by the female character, all that was otherwise achieved would be accomplished at a dreadful cost and a fearful loss. Therefore I entreat you, my young friends, to guard against this evil. Cultivate the meekness,

gentleness, and retiringness which are your brightest ornaments. Make it appear that in what you are doing for God and his cause, you neither seek publicity, nor aim to attract attention, nor to court applause. Avoid all that undue familiarity, flippancy, and trifling with the other sex, which would look as if your object was rather to attract notice from them than really to do good. I ask for nothing prim, prudish, or repulsive; for no dread of converse with men, or flight from their company, as if there were moral contamination in their presence and pollution in their words. Excessive prudery has not always been associated with the highest toned purity; nor has an easy, artless frankness of manner ever been the indication of a bold and forward disposition. Still, be reserved, without pride or coldness: and frank, easy, and ingenuous, without familiarity and obtrusiveness. In this age your danger lies in the latter extreme rather than in the former. Be contented that your influence should flow through society like the blood in the human frame, carrying life and energy with it, but by channels where it is neither heard nor seen.

Female zeal in religious matters must ever be carried forward with due regard to the duties of home. If, as I have stated, home be the sphere of woman's mission, and the first and chief place of her duty, no public objects of any kind must be allowed to interfere with them. This I have already alluded to, but on account of its importance I refer to it again. It is not to the honour of religion, nor to the credit of a wife and mother, for a husband to come home at the dinner hour expecting to see everything ready and in order, and to find all in confusion, and nothing properly arranged, and have

his time wasted by waiting for his wife, who has not finished her benevolent rambles, or her morning's attendance at some females' meeting. Nor is it much for his happiness on coming home in the evening, suffering from the fatigue and vexation of the world's rough business, and when wanting the soothing influence of a wife's sweet voice, to have to sit hours in sadness and solitude, because she is away at some public service. This is not the way to promote connubial felicity, or to interest his mind on behalf of the objects of his wife's zeal. It will never do to serve the Lord with time taken from domestic order, comfort, and family duty. A neglected husband and family are a sad comment upon some women's religious activity: and it is a comment not unfrequently expressed by those who see it in the appearance of the children and the house. These are the instances, of which some who could do much without infringing on domestic claims, but who will do nothing, avail themselves to justify their own selfishness and indolence, and I am sorry that such instances should ever be afforded to them.

Still a woman may look well to the ways of her household, and yet have time to devote to the cause of religion and humanity; and some do so, who by method, diligence, and dispatch, set their house in order. The description of the virtuous woman comprehends both these: "She looketh well to the ways of her household. The heart of her husband doth safely trust her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. Her children rise up and call her blessed. She giveth meat to her household, and her portion to her maidens. She eateth not the bread of idleness." Here is domestic order, management, economy, in perfection. Yet with all this is

associated, "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." There the good housewife is supposed to find time for works of mercy abroad as well as of industry at home. When the comfort of a husband is never neglected, and he has no reason to complain, and does not complain, of the want of his wife's society; and the supervision of the children, as to their general well-being, and their education and home-training are properly attended to; and the whole course of domestic order is maintained with regularity and precision; it is to a christian woman's honour that her method of dispatch and order in the regulation of her household affairs is such as to leave her ample time for usefulness, without infringing on her duties as a wife, a mother, or a mistress. Except in the case of a large family, a destitution of all public spirit is no credit to any female. She cannot be educating her family as she ought to do, if she is not, by her example as well as by her precept, training them to habits of benevolence.

The two extremes then are to be avoided by a married woman, of allowing, on the one hand, the duties of home so entirely to engross her heart, as to feel no interest in anything that is going on in the world for the alleviation of its sorrows or the reformation of its vices, and to cherish no desire to promote the great objects of Christian zeal: and, on the other hand, of allowing them to occupy her attention so far as to neglect the claims of her husband, children, and servants. The chief danger in this age lies in giving too much attention to public duties, especially in the metropolis, the seat and centre of all our great societies, and the place of their annual convocation. It is not much to the

credit of a mother, nor for the advantage of her daughters, to be fond of taking them to many of these public gatherings. The month of May affords a strong temptation to this, and it should be most assiduously guarded against. It is not only lawful, but proper and desirable, that our wives and daughters should be present at such meetings. Who would debar them from all these assemblies, or shut them out from all these feasts of holy charity, or exclude them from all these scenes in which they take as deep an interest, and to which they have contributed equally with ourselves? Their sex is more benefited by them even than the other. Let woman's heart there bleed over the woes of humanity, and especially of her down-trodden sisters in the lands of darkness; let woman's hand be there stretched out to lift them up from their degradation, and woman's eye there sparkle with a brighter lustre as it rejoices over the records of our missions, and the triumphs of Christianity. But let not this rise into such a passion as shall spoil her for scenes partaking of less fascination in some respects, but to her of more importance in others. In order to this, let younger women in these days of general benevolence guard against acquiring in youth that taste for public activity which, though it will not prevent them from entering into domestic life, will to a very considerable extent disqualify them for its duties. A love of activity is good; a passion for it is an evil. There is such a thing as well-regulated, temperate, religious zeal, and there is also such a thing as a species of religious dissipation. When a young person loves home and home duties, but is ever willing and ready on suitable occasions, and for a proper object, to leave them for

works of religious and common benevolence, she has a right disposition. But when home and home duties are irksome, and she is ever longing for the excitement of public services, her taste has been corrupted, her character damaged, and her prospects for future life have become somewhat beclouded. If she has abjured the intention or wish ever to become a wife, and has, without entering a convent, determined to be a sister of charity, it may be all very well to desire to give herself wholly to works of benevolent activity : but if not, let her beware how she acquires predilections and forms habits which would equally unfit and indispose her for the duties of wedded life.

Young females while at home should be generally regulated by the wishes of their parents, and especially by their mothers. They are not, and should neither wish nor attempt to be, independent of parental control. A good and wise daughter will ever look up with affectionate deference to a good and wise mother, and will not therefore enter on any career of religious activity without consulting her. It may be that the wishes of the child and the opinions of the parent, on this point, are sometimes in opposition to each other, and it requires little argument to prove which in this case ought to give way. Perhaps, some zealous, ardent, young female will put such a question as this : "I feel it my duty to God to attempt to spread religion, and to do good to my fellow-creatures, especially in the way of saving their souls ; but my parents, not being themselves religious, oppose it, and will not allow me either to engage in Sunday-school instruction, to collect for missionary or Bible societies, to distribute tracts, or to read the Scriptures to the poor. Is it my duty to follow out my

own convictions, or yield up my wishes to my parents?" It would be very proper for you, in a respectful and deferential manner, to state your wishes, and use every argument to obtain their compliance: but if this should prove ineffectual, you must then submit and bear the privation without resentful sullenness. To be moody, ill-tempered, and petulant under the refusal, would too plainly indicate that you have much yet to do in your own heart, to foster religion there, before you seek to communicate it to others. You are under no such obligation to exercise your religious zeal in any particular way, as you are to seek your own salvation. It is manifestly your duty to do good, and you can do it, even under such restrictions as those I am now supposing; for you can set a holy example, and you can pray for the spiritual welfare of others, and correspond with absent friends, and perhaps influence by conversation your companions: and thus are not, and cannot be, shut out from all methods of doing good; and as to those from which you are debarred by parental authority, God will take the will for the deed, and reward the intention, as he would have done the action, had you been permitted to perform it. Consider also that as your parents do not enter into your views of religion, they will regard your conduct, if you persist, in no other light than that of a refractory spirit, and will thus receive a prejudice against religion on account of your conduct: whereas a meek and good-natured yielding to their wishes, and sacrificing an object which they perceive to have been near your heart, will dispose them to think favourably of the religious principle which could produce such a spirit of unresisting and uncomplaining self-denial.

In order to be useful, it is necessary to cultivate habits of order, punctuality, and the right employment of time. These remarks apply of course to such as move in the wealthier circles of life, and whose opportunities of doing good are not confined to the Sabbath. Week-days with them should be working-days for God and man, by the offices of religion and humanity. There is no doing good without time. Two things cannot be done at once. Benevolence requires leisure. And how much time is wasted, which the miseries and wants of society require! * Redeem the time, is a warning that should ever be sounding in our ears. We want it for our own improvement, and we want it for the good of others. We can do much with it, and nothing without it. There is scarcely anything to which the injunction of our Lord more strictly applies than to this, "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost." Order redeems time, so does punctuality: therefore order and punctuality are among the means of mercy and zeal, by supplying the time necessary for their exercise. Redeem time from useless reading, and also from that excessive addictedness to the accomplishments of music, drawing,

* Perhaps the following very striking antithetic description of time will amuse and instruct many of the readers of this chapter: "Time is the most undefinable yet paradoxical of things; the past is gone, the future is not come, and the present becomes the past, even while we attempt to define it, and like the flash of the lightning, at once exists and expires. Time is the measure of all things, but is itself immeasureable, and the grand discloser of all things, but is itself undisclosed. Like space, it is incomprehensible, because it has no limit, and it would be still more so, if it had. It is more obscure in its source than the Nile, and in its termination than the Niger: and advances like the slowest tide, but retreats like the swiftest torrent. It give wings of lightning to pleasure, but feet of lead to pain, and lends expectation a curb, but enjoyment a spur. It robs beauty of her charms, to bestow them on her picture, and builds a monument

and fancy work, which is so characteristic of the present day. That some portion of time may be given by females in wealthy circles to these things is admitted. I am not for parting with the exquisite polish which skill in these matters imparts to female elegance. I love to see the decorations of female mind and manners. Of this I may have to speak again in a future chapter, and therefore shall merely now enquire, when the cries of misery are entering into her ears, and the groans of creation are arising all around her; when countless millions abroad are living and dying without the light of the gospel and the hope of salvation; when at our own doors will be found so many passing in ignorance and wickedness to their great account; is it for a humane, and especially for a religious young woman to spend so much precious time each day over her knitting, crotchet, or embroidery work? As she sits plying those needles, and bringing out, it may be, the tasteful device hour after hour, does she never hear the cry of human woe, "Come over and help us?" Does it never occur to her, how many souls have gone into eternity unpre-

to merit, but denies it a house; it is the transient and deceitful flatterer of falsehood, but the tried and final friend of truth. Time is the most subtle yet the most insatiable of depredators, and by appearing to take nothing, is permitted to take all: nor can it be satisfied, until it has stolen the world from us, and us from the world. It constantly flies, yet overcomes all things by flight, and although it is the present ally, it will be the future conqueror of death. Time, the cradle of hope but the grave of ambition, is the stern corrector of fools, but the salutary counsellor of the wise, bringing all they dread to the one, and all they desire to the other; but like Cassandra, it warns us with a voice that even the sagest discredit too long, and the silliest believe too late. Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it: he that has made it his friend, will have little to fear from his enemies, but he that has made it his enemy, will have little to hope from his friends."

pared to meet their God, since she took her chair and commenced her daily task? Or, even leaving out of view the employment of her time for deeds of religious zeal, is it not an afflicting sight to behold so much time thrown away on these elegant trifles, which might be employed in cultivating the mind by useful reading? You cannot, systematically, do good without redeeming time for the purpose.

Permit me now to remind you that all your efforts of religious zeal should be carried on in a spirit of faith and prayer. It should not be merely the love of activity, much less an ambitious fondness for publicity and display, that moves you; but the overpowering feelings of love to God and love to man. It must not be a substitute for religion, but the impulse and the constraining power of it. Instead of weakening your own piety, it must strengthen it. Emanating from your own holy mind, it must, like the newly kindled flame, re-act upon and increase the fervour of its source. You must be watchful over your spirit, and take care that your humility and spirituality be not impaired by a spirit of vanity. You should look well to your motives, and subject your heart to a most rigid self-scrutiny. In the retirement of the closet you should cultivate that spirit of dependence which expresses itself in prayer, and is cherished by prayer. The more you do for the spiritual welfare of others, the more you must do for your own. You should take alarm if you find that the excitements of zeal produce indisposedness for the more retired and quiet exercises of devotion. A renewed consecration to your work should often taken place, preceded by a renewed consecration of yourselves to God.

To encourage you in your career of holy activity, I may call you, in conclusion, to consider the nature of your work, and the consequences that will follow even your humble endeavours to carry it on. It is religion, the gift of God to man, which Jesus Christ came to our world to produce, and the Scriptures are written to describe and impart: it is religion, the balm of man's wounded heart, the renovator of his corrupt nature, the means of his happiness, his preparation for immortal glory: it is religion, the source of individual comfort, domestic peace, social order, national prosperity, and the whole world's restoration: it is religion, which shall cover our earth with the glories of the millennium, and raise up countless millions of our race from the ruins of the fall to the heavens of the eternal God: it is religion, which shall be the glory and the bliss of the redeemed church throughout eternity: it is religion, the cause for which prophets testified, apostles laboured, martyrs bled, ministers toil at home, and missionaries abroad; it is this that you are promoting by all your efforts of religious zeal. In this cause you shall not labour in vain, nor without your reward, for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" and your humble labours, though as drops in that mighty ocean, shall help to swell and impel the mighty mass; and after this, shall come the world where you shall be gathered unto those holy women whose lives were briefly recorded in a past chapter, and to all those chaste virgins and holy matrons, who have wrought to weave by their labours the crown of glory which shall ever flourish on the head of our Emmanuel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PARENTAL HOME.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise. EPHESIANS vi, 1, 2.

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. PROVERBS xxi, 19.

Be kindly affectioned one to another. ROMANS xii, 10.

It was the saying of a judicious governess to a pupil on quitting her establishment, "Be assured, my young friend, that the order, comfort and happiness of a family, very greatly depend upon the temper and conduct of the younger members of it, when they cease to be children. I have seen the declining years of some kind parents completely embittered by the pride, self-will, and inconsiderate conduct of their young people. When a young lady returns home, if she is not so good a daughter as she was before, whatever acquisitions she may have made at school, she had better not have been there."

This advice, so sensible and so appropriate, not only shows how well-qualified was the admirable woman who proffered it for the discharge of her duties, but is well worthy of being written on the first page of every young woman's album, yea, upon the tablet of her heart, and

of being read by her every day of her residence in her father's house.

It has been said, we are all really, what we are relatively. Akin to this, I may add, every one is best known at home. Many not only dress their persons, but their characters, when they go into company, till it has become almost a current saying: "Tell me not what people are in company, but what they are in the family circle." Home, as I have already said, is one of the sweetest words in our language; and nowhere better understood than in our own country. But it involves as many duties as it does enjoyments. It is not only a paradise of delights, but a school of virtue. A family is a little world within doors; the miniature resemblance of the great world without. It is in the home of her parents that a young female is trained for a home of her own: and generally speaking what she was in the former, that, in full maturity and expansion, she will be in the latter; the good wife and judicious mother, looking well to the ways of her household, being the full-blown rose of which the good girl at home was the bud of promise and of hope. And it may be depended upon as a principle, suggested by reason, as well as a fact corroborated by observation, that she who contributes nothing to the happiness of her early home as a daughter, is not likely to find others contributing to her later one as a wife, a mother, and a mistress. It is therefore of immense importance that you should at once, at the very commencement of this chapter, pause and ponder the momentous truth, that you are preparing your own future home by the manner in which you conduct yourself in that of your father: and because of its importance it is thus dwelt upon with such repetition.

In one aspect the subject of this chapter is of more consequence in reference to you, than it is in reference to your brothers; you remain longer at home than they. It is the usual order of things for them to remove early from beneath the parental roof, first to learn, and then to pursue, their avocations in life; so that if their temper be unamiable and their habits unfriendly to domestic peace, they soon depart and the annoyance goes with them. But you, if not necessitated to go out into a situation for your own support, remain with your parents until you are married; and if not wedded, you are with them continually. In the latter case, being a fixture in the household, you are under the greater obligation to increase its happiness. Of how much comfort or disquiet, according to her character and conduct, may a daughter be to a family through a period of ten or twenty years, dating from the period of her return from school! Hence it is always a source, not of unmixed delight, but of some anxiety, to a considerate mother, what kind of home character her child will prove when she has finished her education, and exchanges the company of her governess and fellow-pupils for that of the family circle.

Here then is the first thing, the great thing, to be determined upon by the young woman on her return home, to be largely a contributor to the happiness of the domestic circle. You cannot be a cipher in the house, or a negative character. The other members of the little community must be affected by your conduct. You are ever in the midst of them, and your actions, words, and even your looks, exert an influence upon them. Behold, then, your starting point in the career of home duties. Take up this resolution, intel-

ligently, deliberately, determinately, "I will, by God's grace, do all I can to make my home happy to others, and thus comfortable to myself." Look at this resolution, ponder it, imprint it on your memory, heart, conscience. Is it not wise, virtuous, right? Do not reason, conscience, self-love, approve it? Let it be a serious matter of consideration with you, not merely a thought passing through the mind, and leaving no trace behind; but a deep, abiding, influential consideration. Have not your parents a right to expect it? Is it not the most reasonable thing in the world, that enjoying the protection and comforts of home, you should in return make home happy?

To diffuse happiness anywhere is a blissful enjoyment, but most of all at home. To light up any countenances with joy, is to a benevolent mind, a desirable thing; but most of all the countenances of parents, brothers, and sisters. Set out with an intense ambition to compel from the whole family circle the testimony that it was a happy era in its history when you came permanently to reside at home. O, to hear a mother say, "Thy coming, my daughter, was as the settlement of a ministering angel amongst us; thy amenity of temper, thy constant efforts to please, thy sweet and gentle self-sacrificing disposition have been a lamp in our dwelling, in the light of which we have all rejoiced. What a large accession, my beloved child, hast thou brought to our domestic felicity! Receive thy mother's thanks and blessing." A harder heart than yours, my young friends, might be moved by such a hope as this. Contemplate now the contrast to this, when the conduct of the daughter is such as to extort such a declaration as the following from sorrowful parents: "We looked forward with pleasure and with

hope, not altogether unmixed with anxiety, to the time when we should receive her back from school, to be our companion and our comfort. How bitter is our disappointment. Her unamiable disposition, her regardlessness of our happiness, her restlessness in the family circle, her craving for any company but ours, are painfully obvious. It was, we regret to say it, a sad increase of our domestic trouble, when she became a permanent inmate of our house." Sighs and tears follow this sad confession. Which of these shall be the case with you? Can you hesitate?

Having then made up your mind to be a comfort at home, you should, and will, of course, inquire into the means of accomplishing your purpose. These will, if the purpose be fixed, and the desire intense, almost without any enumeration suggest themselves. Those who really want to make others happy, will find out their own means of doing so, and be ingenious in their devices to effectuate their end. Many things are difficult and require deep thought, but not so the desire to please. If our heart be set upon it, we can diffuse bliss almost without effort or contrivance. From a heart fully possessed with the desire to make others happy, kind acts and offices will perpetually flow off, like the waters of a spring ever rising of themselves.

But I will lay down rules for your guidance, that your behaviour at home may contribute to the happiness of your family circle.

Should your parents themselves be truly pious people, who have trained you up in the fear of the Lord, their deepest solicitude and most earnest prayer for you, is that you may "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." You have been the witnesses of some

of their anxiety on this ground, and for this object. You have heard a father's prayers, have seen, perhaps, a mother's tears for your salvation; but of the whole of their concern on this point you never can know. It is too deep for you to fathom. Till this great subject is determined; till they see you in earnest to lead a pious life, they cannot be happy. They value your love, your respect, your attentions to their comfort, your general good conduct, your acquirements, and not unfrequently feel a parent's pride over you; but "Alas, alas," they say, "one thing thou lackest yet, and that is, the one thing needful, true piety, the salvation of the soul. Oh, my daughter, that thou wast a real Christian; and that thy love to Christ were as sincere as thy love for me: and that all thy other excellences were sanctified by the crowning one of true religion." What a check is such a reflection to the joy of a Christian parent. How many hours of bitterness such reflections occasion! What an interruption to the bliss of a family does it occasion when there is a difference of taste on this most momentous of all subjects! How is a mother's heart grieved to see her daughters, after all the pains she has taken to form their religious character, more taken up with fashion, company, and gaiety, than with eternal realities! And that good man, their father, how is he distressed to see his counsels unheeded, his prayers unanswered, and they whom he had hoped to lead to the altar of God, far more fond of the gay ceremonial of the world! On the other hand, how happy are those parents whose children are one with them in this momentous concern. How sweet and sacred are the seasons of family worship, when, not by constraint, but willingly, the children assemble round the domestic altar,

and join in the sacrifice of prayer and praise. No jars and discords now arise for the want of sympathy in these great subjects. No opposition of tastes occurs, no clashing of interests. Often and often does the mother exclaim in the fondness of her heart, "Thank God, that dear girl is a Christian, and to all her other excellences which endear her to my heart, adds piety towards God. The beauties of holiness invest her charms with a loveliness that nothing else can impart."

In order to make home happy, there must be a proper consideration and right discharge of all the duties you owe to the various members of the little community of which it is composed.

First of all, there are your parents. That home cannot be a happy one where they are neglected, and filial duty is wanting in the heart and conduct of the children. God has selected the most comprehensive term that could be employed on this subject, "Honour thy father and mother:" this includes respect, love, and obedience. It is not necessary here to state the claims which parents have upon your gratitude, reverence, and regard. I can only remind you how much of the happiness of home depends upon a right understanding and discharge of the duties you owe to them. When the father's heart is wounded by disobedient conduct, or even disrespectful language; when the mother's comfort is neglected, and her burdens are unshared: when it is apparent that the children are much more intent upon their own gratification than that of their parents: when services are rendered them tardily, reluctantly, and with ill-nature: when complaint is uttered on one part, only to be answered by impertinence on the other, happiness must be a stranger in such a home. Disobe-

dience in young children, in whom reason and reflection are yet feeble, is bad enough, but it is far worse in those who are grown or growing to years of maturity. On the other hand, if it be beautiful to see the tender assiduities and affectionate attentions of childhood, which are rather the efforts of instinct than of reason, it is a far more attractive scene to witness the reverent regard, the studious desire to please, the anxious effort to gratify, manifested towards her parents by a grown-up daughter. Here the intelligent mind is moved by the affectionate heart, and the affectionate heart is, in return, guided and impelled by the intelligent mind. If your parents have been less educated than you, and at the same time have spared no expense to afford you advantages which they did not possess, how ungrateful would it be in you, by any part of your conduct, to display your superiority and make them conscious of their ignorance! Before a mother's infirmities reach the point of actual incompetency, a good daughter will feel solicitous to share with her the burden of domestic care, and to relieve her as far as possible from her load of maternal duty. This requires caution, lest by an officious obtrusion of help, it should be suspected she was desirous of thrusting the mother from her superintendence, and of stepping into her place. It can never fail to wound a mother's heart to be supposed to be incompetent to fill her own situation as female head of the family. Even when imbecility is creeping on, she should be made to feel it as little as possible, and the forms and show of authority should be suffered to remain, when the reality has passed away. Jealousy is one of the last passions that die in the human heart, and it should not be awakened by any part of filial conduct in the mind

of a parent. A wife, mother, and mistress, deposed by her daughter, is a painful sight. She may have much weakness, but still enough reflection remains to make her feel her humiliation. Therefore, young women, in aiding a mother, do not attempt to wrest the keys from her keeping, but only employ them under her direction. For this be ever ready. It is to me one of the most lovely scenes on earth to see a young woman risen up to be the companion and helper of her mother, placing herself by her side, and foregoing many an invitation and opportunity of personal enjoyment to relieve her solitude, to lighten her cares, or to minister to her comfort. Your object should be to share your mother's labours, without superseding her authority : and to assist her in a way so tender and so delicate as shall neither awaken her suspicion that you wish to supplant her, nor make her feel that she is incapable of doing without you. To these duties all should be attentive, but especially those daughters who make a profession of religion. Many who will read this work are happily in this state : and to them would I most earnestly and affectionately say, "Let your light shine" at home, that its inmates "seeing your good works, may glorify God your Heavenly Father." Let it be most impressively and constantly felt by you, and let it be seen by others, that you feel that religion is no abstract thing of times, places, and occasions; but an element of the general character, which is to enter into all relations, all duties, and all engagements. It must improve you in every thing, spreading like a gilded surface over your whole selves and all your conduct, and shining like a beautiful polish on every other excellence. It must make you a better daughter in every respect, more respectful, more

kind, more devoted to your parents; and compel them to say, "Happy was the day when she became a Christian, for from that hour she became a lovelier and more loving child."

It may be that the parents of some of you are not truly converted to God. This places you in a difficult and delicate situation, and will require the utmost solicitude, care, and prayer, that you may be prevented from doing or being anything that would prejudice them against religion; and that you may be enabled on the contrary so to conduct yourself as to prepossess them in its favour. You must affect no superiority, nor even seem to say, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." This is improper towards any one, much more towards a parent. You can pray for them, and you can exhibit to them, by your example, invested with all the beauties of holiness, what religion is; but direct efforts to bring them under its influence, though they should not be altogether withheld, should be conducted with the greatest tenderness, humility, modesty and delicacy. There must be no lecturing, much less any reproach or accusation. A deep, tender, loving solicitude for their spiritual welfare, must be seen veiled with modesty, but still seen, penetrating the transparent and graceful covering; a solicitude which only now and then presumes to speak; but, when it does, always in love. Such a line of conduct may accomplish its purpose, and produce results like the following: A female, who had been some years known and respected for her quiet, consistent, unobtrusive, Christian deportment, called on her minister to introduce her aged mother, who leaned on her arm, and seemed to repose on her that tender dependence which is so soothing and delightful to an

aged parent, and so heart-thrilling to a dutiful and grateful child. Both were overcome by their feelings, and it was some moments before either could speak. The minister desired them to be seated, and cheerfully said, 'Well Hannah, I suppose this is your good mother, I am very happy to see her.' 'Yes,' replied the mother in broken accents, 'Her mother, and her daughter too. Five-and-twenty years ago I bore her in infancy; and now through her instrumentality, I trust I am born to God.'" Mr. Jay relates a similar anecdote. "'Well,' said a mother, one day, weeping (her daughter being proposed as a candidate for Christian communion), 'I will resist no longer. How can I bear to see my dear child love and read the Scriptures, while I never look into the Bible; to see her retire and seek God, while I never pray; to see her going to the Lord's table, while his death is nothing to me?' 'Ah,' said she to the minister who called to inform her of her daughter's desire, wiping her eyes, 'Yes, sir, I know she is right and I am wrong: I have seen her firm under reproach, and patient under provocation, and cheerful in all her sufferings. When, in her late illness, she was looking for dissolution, heaven stood in her face. Oh, that I was as fit to die! I ought to have taught her, but I am sure she has taught me. How can I bear to see her joining the church of God, and leaving me behind, perhaps for ever? From that hour she prayed in earnest that the God of her child would be her God, and was soon seen walking with her in the way everlasting."

But there are, in most cases, other members of the household besides parents, brothers and sisters, who also require attention and right conduct from a young woman at home. A loving, united, harmonious family,

I repeat again, where the children all promote the comfort of their parents and of one another; where each is studious to please and to perform all kind offices for the rest, and all seek the happiness of each, is one of the loveliest scenes to be found in our divided and discordant world. Much, very much, depends upon the daughters for this domestic harmony. They can exert, if prudent, good-tempered and obliging, a softening influence over the minds and manners of their brothers. Sisterly affection, judiciously displayed, is one of the sweetest and most powerful ingredients in the cup of domestic enjoyment. True it is, that it will require occasionally some little self-denial, and sacrifice of personal gratification, predilection, and feeling, to conciliate the affection, and secure the good-will of brothers, who are apt to begin too soon to feel that they are "the lords of the creation;" but this is necessary to keep the peace of the family. And a girl of good sense and affectionate disposition, will do a great deal towards it. Woman is made to yield, though not to be trampled upon. Her gentle nature is formed for submission, rather than for resistance. A good and wise sister will feel this, and her affection will, in most cases, be her protection. Let her put forth the thousand little ingenious arts, of which she is, or may be, mistress, and throw the silken cords of love over her brother's hearts, and she may do much to attach, and in some cases, even to subject, them to her, and make them fond of home. A husband is but too apt to run away from the home which is tenanted by an ill-natured wife; and brothers have been often driven away to company, by cross, sullen, unaccommodating sisters. I am aware that it is but too frequently

the case, that young men are polite and attentive to every female but those they every day meet at home, and that scarcely any one has to complain of a want of civility and complaisance but their sisters. At the same time it must be confessed, that some young women have themselves to blame for this, for it does require more virtue than is ordinarily found, to be much attached and very attentive to such an impersonation of pettishness, ill-humour, and vanity, as some silly girls present at home. How many parents' comfort is disturbed, and their hearts half-broken, by the jealousy, envy, and contention of their children !

To the elder daughter, especially if she be older than her brothers also, a larger share of responsibility attaches than to any other of the children, because her influence is greater. She does almost as much to form the character of the younger branches as the mother, and when the latter is feeble or inefficient, perhaps more. It is a lovely sight to behold an intelligent and affectionate girl, exerting a plastic yet not authoritative or dictatorial power over her younger brothers or sisters, setting them a beautiful example of filial piety, and devoting all her efforts to uphold parental authority over them, conciliating their confidence by her judgment, and their affection by her kindness ; throwing a softening and gentle influence over their ruder and harsher natures, and compelling the parents to say "She is a second mother to the family."

The servants must not be left out of consideration. They add much, very much, to the comfort or disquiet of families ; and they are considerably influenced, not only by the conduct of the parents, but by that of the children. Were I addressing young men, I should re-

mind them of the distance without pride, the kindness without familiarity, the purity in thought, word, and deed, which is necessary to be observed in their conduct towards female servants. But I am addressing young women, and therefore remind them that the three things to be practised are kindness, considerateness, and confidence; and the three to be avoided are haughtiness, oppression, and familiarity. A young woman displays considerable littleness of mind, as well as forgetfulness of the laws of God, when she treats a servant with scorn and contempt, as a being of an inferior nature. That servant may have not only a finer form and a stronger mind, but a holier heart and a diviner taste, and may be her superior in every respect, except in rank. Nor is this the only kind of ill-treatment that servants are sometimes doomed to bear from their young mistresses, and alas, sometimes under the cognisance of their old mistress. Women of high rank are brought up with the notion and the practice also, that they are to do nothing for themselves, and they are usually provided with a waiting-maid to do everything for them, whose place would be a sinecure, if her young mistress did anything for herself. But for others in the middle of life to be brought up in helplessness, is a discredit to the mother, and injury to the daughter, and generally a cruelty to those who are called to wait on them. Such a system of aping the manners of the nobility, with scarcely means to command the service necessary for a tradesman's household, is indeed contemptible. Mothers, I speak to you. Train your daughters, not to be fine and helpless ladies, but to be useful wives, mothers, and mistresses. Be yourselves patterns in these things, and secure the imitation of

your daughters. See to it, that they learn to help themselves in all proper matters, and do not allow them to press too hard upon the energies of your servants. Much will depend upon you in this matter. And do you, my young female friends, enter warmly and wisely into this subject yourselves. Do not affect the fine lady, or wish to be only a kind of dressed dolls, to be carried about and played with by others. I do not ask you to do anything to degrade yourself below your rank and station, or anything that would lower you in the eyes of the servants themselves; but still be ambitious to grow up in a state of independence, and in preparedness to make your way through life, even against difficulties and privations, should you be called to meet with them. Your own happiness, as well as the comfort of the servants, demands you should be as considerate and give as little trouble as possible. It was certainly a happy invention for mistresses when bell-hanging was invented, but a great misery for some servants, in whose ears the jingle of the parlour or bed-room bell is ever sounding. "What," says many a thoughtless young woman, "were servants made for but to wait upon us?" And what were young limbs given you for but to wait upon yourselves? It would do some young persons good if for one year at least, they were without a servant at all, and had everything to do for themselves. How much better, how much nobler, than this inconsiderateness, is the kindness which not only avoids giving trouble, but also leads a young lady, in addition to attending to a servant's general comfort, to teach her to read and write, and takes the oversight of her education in things important for her to know, especially the subject of personal religion! But there

is another thing on which a few remarks should be made, and that is the undue familiarity which young women sometimes contract with female servants. Kindness, to whatever extent it may and should be carried, and whatever offices it leads to, does not imply companionship: a good and wise servant will not wish it, and knows her place too well to make the attempt. It is only she whose mind is as artful as that of her young mistress is weak, who will seek to gain ascendancy over her, and to become her confidante. "A young lady," says Mrs Copley, "would very much degrade and injure herself by choosing to make a servant, however respectable, her familiar associate, the vehicle of gossip or scandal, the partner in her jokes, the confidante of her affairs. Such intimacies are most prejudicial, disgraceful, and perilous. Many a young lady, who thought it no harm to listen to the flattering tales of an artful servant about her beauty and her conquests, has been led on to receive from her hands the seductive letter, to fall in with her contrivance for clandestine interviews, and at length to complete a marriage without the knowledge or approbation of her parents, and in its results ruinous to herself. Where things have not been carried on to this disastrous extremity, much levity and imprudence have resulted from such unprofitable and unsuitable intimacies, which have occasioned unpleasant reports and surmises at the time, and have formed matter of painful reflection in the mind of the individual, long after the connexion has been dissolved, and the danger escaped."

I now suggest some other matters, partially implied in what I have already advanced, but of sufficient importance to be brought out in full view. Among these

must be mentioned amiability: in other words, that sweetness of temper which is ever seeking to please, and to avoid whatever would offend. There is a saying, that "Temper is everything." This is going too far, since it is not to be doubted good temper is sometimes associated with bad principle: while on the other hand, there are many high-principled and noble-minded individuals, who are troubled, equally to their own annoyance and that of their friends, with infirmities of temper. Still, though not everything, good temper is a great thing. Very much depends in this matter upon our physical organization, for we see the same difference in the brute creation that we observe in the human species. But this, though an explanation, is not an apology; because reason and religion may do much, and in myriads of instances have done much, to correct and improve a disposition naturally bad. Begin life, young woman, with a deep impression of the value of good temper, both to your own happiness and to that of the persons with whom you have to do, especially your family circle. Study well your own temper. Know well what it is you have to contend with in your own case, and set yourself most diligently to subdue it. Be mistress of yourself! Bad temper is a generic phrase, there are several species of the thing, as for instance, there is a peevishness or petulance about some persons which makes them susceptible of offence, not of either a very deep or passionate kind, but an irritability which disposes them to be hurt at little things, and to complain of the conduct of others, rather than to have their resentment excited. Then there is the violent temper, which is excited, by some supposed or real offence, to sudden ebullitions of wrath, sometimes even to a storm, or what

we call being in a passion. There is also the sullen disposition, which, on being contradicted, opposed, or reproved, sinks into a silent, moody, and inwardly resentful state of mind. Persons of this turn will sulk for hours, if not days; retiring into themselves, they will brood over the matter which has occasioned their unhappy state, till they have actually made themselves ill by their bad temper; and yet, if expostulated with, will assert they are not ill-tempered, but only "hurt." This is the disposition, which, more than anything else, is an interruption to domestic peace. I am no apologist for stormy passions, or for those that indulge them, but those who are soon in a blaze and as soon cooled down and the fire extinguished, are not so inimical to the peace of a family, as those in whose heart the embers of ill-will are kept long smouldering under the ashes and not suffered to go out. Next there is the selfish disposition, which leads its possessor ever to be seeking to concentrate the attentions of the family upon herself, especially if subject to indisposition. All must bend to her; and every hand be employed by her. Her will must be consulted in everything, and her comfort be the study of all. She must engross the affection of her parents, the regard of her brothers and sisters, and the time and labour of the servants. This is sometimes fostered by injudicious parents, who excite the envy and jealousy of the other branches of the family, by this exaction from all for the sake of the one. True, where there is much indisposition the sufferer should be, and usually is, the centre of sympathetic attention: but where the ailments are slight, and especially where the patient is apt to exaggerate them, she should not be petted into an engrossing and exacting selfishness; but

should be gently taught to have a little regard to the comfort of others. In addition to these, there is the jealous and envious disposition, which contends not only for pre-eminence, but for monopoly; which accounts as a rival every one who receives the least special notice, and dislikes her on that account. What petty passions of this kind often creep into families, and poison all the springs of domestic happiness! Consider how much the tempers of its members have to do with the peace of a household, how much of sunshine one sweet and lovely disposition, constantly in exercise, may throw over a household; and on the other hand, how much of gloom, and storm, one passionate, sullen, selfish, or envious temper, may bring over the little community at home. Let all then begin life with a deep conviction, (and it cannot be too deep,) of the importance of this subject. A bad temper will torment you through life. With this you will carry your own curse with you everywhere. It will multiply your enemies, and alienate your friends: it will becloud your reason and benumb your religion: it will embitter your comforts and envenom your trials: it will make you unhappy at home, and secure you distress when from home: it will give you wretchedness at the time, and conscious guilt and painful reflections afterwards; it will deprive your days of peace and your nights of sleep; in short, a bad temper will be to the soul what a chronic and painful disease is to the body, a constant source of uneasiness and distress, with this difference, that whereas the former is a visitation from God, the latter is our own doing, and while one brings its own consolation with it to the Christian, the other brings nothing but punishment and shame.

To make home happy you must of course conform to

its general rules. This perhaps it is less necessary to insist upon in reference to you than it is to your brothers, because you are less in danger than they are of infringing domestic order. Every well-regulated family has its laws and customs; its times and seasons; its government and authority, which must be observed if the little community be kept in order and good condition. I will suppose it is a pious family where God is worshipped, and the morning and evening sacrifice are duly offered upon the domestic altar. At the appointed hour all ought to be present. Nothing can be more unseemly than to see one member after another come dropping in while the Scriptures are being read, as if the Bible were only the prayer bell to call the family together for worship. I have often witnessed this, and heard the remonstrances of the father with his dilatory children, whose want of punctuality had been occasioned only by a wretched habit of lying late in bed. It has really in some cases given rise to domestic quarrels. Much the same remark will apply to other matters. The father of a family may see reason to object to the late hours of the present day, and may request that all his household shall be at home by a certain hour of the evening. It may be thought by his children that he is too precise, too antiquated in his notions, too inconsiderate of their gratification, but still it is his law, he is master of his house, and they are subjects who are to obey him. It is unseemly for the children to be ever maintaining a struggle against paternal rule and maternal counsel. On the contrary, it is the glory and the praise of a good and dutiful child to find what sacrifices of feeling and gratification she can submit to, rather than commit herself to a struggle with parental authority and domestic govern-

ment. On the other hand, parents should be very careful not to make their yoke oppressive, and their burden heavy. The laws of the family should not be too stringent, nor the authority of the father tyrannical, capricious and unnecessarily precise. But they must be obeyed as long as they last, and the elder branches of the family, where there are younger ones, should excel in leading them both by example and precept to habitual conformity to household law.

If you would make home happy, you must, of course, be happy at home. No one can diffuse joy who is not joyful. The passions are infectious, because the heart is sympathetic. Cheerful persons make others like themselves, and so do gloomy persons; just as the sun irradiates by his beams, or the clouds darken by their shadow, the whole landscape. A young person whose heart finds its resting-place in the domestic circle; whose sympathies are with household scenes; whose chosen companions are her parents, and her brothers, and sisters; whose pleasures are the sweet interchanges of domestic offices and affections; whose loved employment it is to make her daily contribution to the comfort of the little community within doors; and whose good-humoured disposition radiates from smiling eyes, and flows from gently-curled lips, such an inmate is a blessing to the house in which she dwells. The soft music of her speech, aided by the genial influence of her accommodating and insinuating temper, sheds a benign influence on all the family. But observe the opposite to all this, the girl that looks upon her home as a prison rather than a paradise, and thinks that to stay at home is a penance rather than a pleasure; and accordingly is anxious to escape from it, and is ever seeking opportu-

nities to effect her purpose. Her gloomy aspect, her sullen disposition, her discontented air, her repulsive taciturnity, her peevish expressions, when she breaks her silence; her unsympathising isolation, what a member of a family do they make her! She has at home no associates, no objects of strong affection, nothing to engage and interest her heart, but is ever seeking occasions to slip away, upon any pretence, or for any engagement. She is ever on the watch for opportunities or excuses for absence; ready for any errand; eager for every business that opens the door for her egress. She is not happy but in a continual round of parties, visits, or out-of-door novelties, of which this fertile age is so prolific. Any society rather than that of the family, and any scenes rather than those of home, suit her taste. Can such a young person make home happy? Yes, if a spectre can do it, for such, or little better, is she. Young people, I repeat, be happy at home. Parents put forth all your ingenuity to make them so, by investing home with its proper attractions. Mothers, this devolves much on you. Be you "keepers at home," for a gossiping mother is sure to make gossiping daughters. Let it be seen that you are happy at home in the midst of your families. Put on a cheerful countenance, that your children may love to bask in the sunshine of your smiles. Be the centre of attraction to your families, and let the household delight to revolve in sweetest harmony around your maternal chair.

Industrious habits will contribute greatly to the happiness of home, especially on the part of a young female. Slothfulness is a wretched thing, as it regards the subject of it, and as it affects others. A lazy person cannot be a happy one. Indolence is a constant opposi-

tion to the law of our being, which is made for activity. That there is a species of indulgence connected with it, is true; but it is a very mixed kind of gratification, for as it is against nature, there is sometimes a consciousness of this, which awakens the conscience, and inflicts remorse. To the remonstrances of conscience are added the reproaches of others. And as it cannot always be indulged, there are to be overcome the repugnance, the lassitude, the vis inertiæ, which make the least exertion more wearisome to the indolent than far greater efforts are to the active. Slothfulness is a miserable object: the very sight of it inflicts pain upon an industrious person. What a vexation is it to an industrious mother, to see the dull, heavy, immoveable habits of a daughter, whom neither entreaties, persuasives, nor rebukes, can quicken into activity, nor excite to industry: who, if moved at all, must be moved by main force, and needs every minute the same effort to keep it going: a poor lumpish creature, who is enough to wear out the patience of the most forbearing and affectionate mother on earth. Such habits in a daughter must be destructive of domestic happiness. The misery they create may not, like the profligacy of a prodigal son, come upon the family with the noise, and destructive force, and fury, of a hurricane, but it settles down upon its comfort like the silent power of blight or mildew. It is a constant vexation, which eats into a mother's heart, when she finds that a daughter who has grown to an age when she ought to be a relief to maternal labour and solicitude, is a heavy increase to both. This wretched habit may be overcome, and it must be, or you will be a poor, helpless, useless, unhappy creature through life. If indolent in your parent's house, what are you likely to

be in your own? An idle daughter is likely to make an idle mother: and from my soul I pity the man who is tied for life to a lazy, indolent woman. No personal charms, no mental acquirements, no brilliancy of conversation, can make up for the want of domestic industry: and indeed these things are rarely found in the absence of industry, for indolence is usually too lazy to acquire knowledge: the habits of soul and body being in sympathy with each other.

It is essential to your making home happy that there should be much self-denial, a spirit of forbearance, an occasional surrender, for the sake of peace, of supposed rights, a willingness to forego what you could rightfully claim as your own. I am aware there are limits to this, especially in cases where concession pampers tyranny and encourages oppression. There may be brothers, and even sisters, whose disposition is so encroaching, that it should be resisted under parental authority, for the protection of the weaker and more yielding members of the household. It is, however, far better in some cases to concede rights, when the sacrifice is not too costly, and does not involve a violation of principle, than to contend for them. The contest, even where it is successful, often costs more than it is worth, the victory does not pay for the battle. Be, therefore, content sometimes to lose a little for the sake of retaining more. I cannot give you a piece of advice more conducive to your peace at home, or to your comfort through life, than to be ever ready gracefully and quietly to bear with the infirmities of disposition of those around you, and to yield little things which you deem belong to you, rather than disturb the peace of the family by contending for them.

Never seek an undue share of parental affection. Let there be no ambition to be a favourite, nor any arts to obtain this distinction. Some young people have made home miserable in this way, being base and guilty enough to attempt to rise in the esteem and affection of their parents, by little arts of detraction in reference to their brothers and sisters: and their parents being weak enough to encourage the attempt. Partiality was then not only cherished but manifested. Envy and jealousy ensued, and the peace of the family was destroyed. Abhor this conduct and be content to share with other branches of the family your parents' justly apportioned regard.

Recollect that your power to contribute to the happiness of home does not depend on the performance of great services, opportunities for which occur but seldom, but on attention to little matters, which are ever taking place. Our existence as to time, is made up not only of years, but of moments: our body not only of limbs, but of particles: our history not only of great events, but of little occurrences: and our obligations, not only of splendid acts of duty, but of seemingly insignificant ones. Set out in life with a deep sense of the importance of little things, or rather with a conviction that where character, duty, and the happiness not only of ourselves but of others are involved, nothing is little. This applies especially to your conduct in the family. In that little world then, keep up a constant attention to what will constitute the felicity of the passing hour. True politeness has been defined to consist in "benevolence in trifles." This is a beautiful definition, and worthy of being remembered by all who would fill the family circle with bliss. By politeness here, I do not mean

the heartless and unmeaning ceremony taught in Lord Chesterfield's pages; nor even the graceful polish of manners which characterises the intercourse of well-bred people: but a gentle, obliging demeanour and delicacy of behaviour towards all around; that mode of conducting ourselves towards others which is opposed to what is coarse, vulgar, rude, or offensively familiar. The politeness that I mean, is not affection's root, but it is its flower, beauty, and fragrance; or if not the plant itself, it is like the hedge round it, which preserves it from being trampled under foot. In the family circle all the little acts that can give pleasure or pain, all words, tones, and looks, should ever be considered and weighed. Woman has perhaps more tact and discernment in reference to the minor affairs of life than men. Her mental eye is more discerning, her touch more delicate, her taste more refined, on all the matters of behaviour. Let her therefore keep this up in reference to her conduct at home. Mrs. Copley in dwelling upon this, has the following reference to her own history; "Might I be permitted to say, that after the lapse of twenty-six years, a sensation of pleasure thrills through my fingers, when I recollect the daily task of tying on my father's neckcloth, and combing back my mother's silvery locks." * * * "But we return to the more ordinary circumstances of young females, resident under the parental roof, after having finished the term of their education: and observe that their conduct should be marked by a soothing forbearance and tenderness towards the infirmities of their parents. Deafness, lameness, dimsightedness, and other infirmities of age, circumscribe their pleasures, and perhaps a degree of fretfulness is sometimes observed. But a dutiful child

will be fertile in expedients to extend their pleasures, to alleviate their privations, and to bear with and soothe their infirmities. The prompt eye will discern their needs, and anticipate their wishes. The needle will be threaded before the eye aches with endeavouring, and before the sigh is excited by inability, to accomplish it; or, by gentle and playful persuasion, the needle work will be exchanged for knitting or netting. The leg-rest or the footstool will be presented or exchanged before complaint of uneasiness is uttered. The large-printed Bible and the spectacles will be placed at hand; the dim columns of the newspaper will be read aloud; the enquiring eye will be answered by a repetition of the conversation, or of the sacred address, which uttered by a stranger's voice, had passed over the dull ear: and in the most exalted sense, the benevolent pleasure will be enjoyed of being eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, and causing the trembling heart to sing for joy."*

I now return to the idea with which we started, that the right conduct of a daughter at home, is to study to make home happy. There is a fascination in the very expression, a happy home. And so far as what may be called the poetry of home scenes is concerned, is there a lovelier flower to be found in that garden of unearthly delights, that paradise of sweets, than a good daughter and affectionate sister, adorning her maiden charms with the virtues that become her sex, her age, and her relationships, and elevating and sanctifying all her other excellences by a saintly piety, which makes her lovely in the eyes of God by all the beauties

* From "Female Excellence," published by the Religious Tract Society.

of holiness? Her father's pride, her mother's comfort, and her brother's companion, she is the ministering angel of them all. How much of bliss does this one dear object of their common affection throw over them all! Her absence is mourned as a common loss, and her return to the family circle is hailed as the restoration of a suspended enjoyment. When this lovely one is loved by another not belonging to the family, though about, through her, to be united with it, with what a treasure, at their expense, is he about to enrich his own home! Their hearts, at the thought of parting from her, bleed from wounds which nothing but the hope of her happiness could heal. Her removal leaves a blank, which, as they look upon her vacant seat, calls up recollections, and produces a sense of deprivation, which even the sight of her happiness can scarcely dispel. But as woman's mission is to make happy her husband's home, suppose her gone forth to fulfil it. Well has she been trained, and well has she trained herself also, at her parental home, for this home of her own, and all the united excellences of the good daughter and the good sister now develope and blend in the more mature and matronly virtues of the good wife, mother, and mistress: and she who as the young woman at home, contributed so largely to the felicity of one family circle, has just prepared herself to contribute still more largely to the felicity of another, and that other is her own. Behold, my young friends, your pattern. May the imitation of it be your study, your prayer, your bliss.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AWAY FROM HOME.

Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest. GENESIS xxviii, 15.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. PROVERBS iii, 6.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. PSALM lxxiii. 24.

THE hour of separation from parental society, home enjoyments, and the scenes of early history, is in most cases, and ought to be in all, a season of pensive grief. No affectionate daughter can leave the house of her father, and go from beneath the covering wing of maternal love, without passing over "the bridge of sighs." Even the joys of the bridal morning, when she quits the arms of her hitherto nearest relations, for those of one now still nearer, do not prevent her from looking round with something of instinctive regret on the scenes she is leaving, now no longer hers; and amidst the smiles of the happy bride, are seen falling the tears of the loving child, like dew-drops sparkling in sun-beams. It would augur ill for the husband, if his wife could part from her parents, even for him, without a momentary pang. It is one of nature's loveliest sights to see in

that scene and season of delight, filial piety blending its lustre with conjugal affection, and investing even nuptial charms with new and captivating beauty.

But I now speak of a different kind and purpose of separation from home. I contemplate the young woman, not led out by that right hand, the "cunning" of which is to be employed for her support; nor going away, leaning upon that arm which is to be continually stretched over her for protection, but departing solitarily and mournfully on the journey of life, to meet alone its dangers, cares, and toils. It is sad enough to see a young man quitting his father's house, and leaving home to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow; how much more to see a young female thus going forth to seek her own support. What is she but a lamb venturing out into the wilderness where wolves abound; or a young dove quitting its nest to fly abroad amidst eagles and vultures. How many in the progress of life, and amidst its changes, some of which are so melancholy, look back to the hour of separation and exclaim, "O my mother, how sad and certain presages of what awaited me were those bitter tears I shed on that morning when I tore myself from thy embrace! My heart then sunk, and the sun of my life then set never to rise. Every step since then of my dark journey has been one of sorrow: and every change only of one calamity for another."

In some cases separation from home is rendered necessary by a change in domestic circumstances, and she who was brought up tenderly amidst the luxuries, and with the prospects, of opulence, is now compelled to quit scenes where she was a stranger to toil and care, to earn her own support. It is a sight to be looked

upon with admiration, to behold a young woman in such circumstances, instead of hanging upon parents no longer able to support her, without additional privations for themselves, nobly resolving to relieve them of the burden, and instead of sitting down in despairing grief and helpless sorrow, bracing her mind to meet the privations of her altered condition, descending gracefully to a lower level, and going forth with true magnanimity, inspired by religion, to tread life's stormy way alone. No morbid sense of degradation; no feeling of false shame arising from altered circumstances: no haughty sense of humiliation connected with a situation of subordination and dependence, benumbs her faculties, paralyses her energies, or renders the duties of her new situation irksome and oppressive: but remembering it is the will of Providence, and thankful for her health, her abilities, and her opportunities to take care of herself, she goes to her new sphere without dread, despondency, or reluctance.

Others meet with no such reverse, but are brought up amidst circumstances which have always kept before them the probability that they must go out into the world to support themslves. In these cases, the change comes not upon them by a surprise, and if they are wise they will endeavour to prepare their hearts and qualify their minds for it. A judicious mother's energies and vigilance will ever be employed, not only in helping her daughters, but in teaching them to help themselves. Wherever there is a probability of their leaving home, and even when there is not, her anxiety, considering the vicissitudes of human life, should be directed to the point of qualifying them to become self-supporting. And it should be a point of ambition

with every young woman, whose parents can with difficulty support their family, not to be a burthen to them, but to provide for herself in some honourable and useful occupation. It is a very beautiful scene to witness a young female, not only supporting herself, but endeavouring by the produce of her diligence, and the savings of her frugality, to minister to the comfort of her aged, infirm, or impoverished parents. Many a heroine has left home, and endured privations neither few nor small, for this purpose. All her discomfort and labour were endured with patience, under the idea that by this means she was rendering the home of her beloved parents more happy. Here, however, a caution is necessary against a too great eagerness to get away from home. A large family, where there is a straitened income, brings many cares and some privations, not only upon the mother, but upon the elder daughters. In such a case, for a young woman who can be of essential service to her mother, and whom her mother wishes to retain, to determine or even wish to go out into the world, and leave her mother to struggle and almost faint under the load, is a deplorable want of filial piety. It is delightful to hear a daughter say, "Anywhere, or in any circumstances, abroad or at home, in single or in wedded life, my beloved and honoured parents, I am ready and eager to serve you."

There is another and melancholy occasion which not unfrequently occurs, for a young woman's leaving home, and that is when home itself is broken up by the death of both parents. How frequently does this happen! Ah, how often are families invaded by the last enemy, and scattered hither and thither by his desolating ravages! The grave covers both father and mother.

The dear domestic hearth is forsaken. The family gatherings at prayer, at meals, at festive seasons, are over, and the house of your childhood and youth is deserted. Poor orphans, I pity you; especially, ye orphans girls, my heart bleeds for you. Your brothers can provide for themselves better than you can. But even you have no need to despond. Painful I know it is, to have no parent, no home, no settled place of abode. Often in your forlorn situation, you must and do say, "Alas for me! I am alone in the world. David's expression suits my case. I am like a pelican in the wilderness; or like a sparrow alone upon the house-top. Other young people, though away from home, have a home to think and talk about: and parents to write to, and occasionally to visit. I have none. I have not a house to dwell in except that which I may soon be required to leave, nor have I any friends, except those whom my own good conduct may secure. My heart is often more desolate than my condition; and though I am in the midst of society, I feel as if I were alone in this great and busy world." But I remind you there is the orphan's unfailing friend still left. God lives, and he is the father of the fatherless. Be it yours, and it may be yours, to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." Should you be so wise and happy as to become truly pious, you will never be without a friend, and in the absence of an earthly father, will have an omnipotent one in heaven. You may then set out in life, and go through it, adopting as your motto, the reply of Abraham to Isaac, who, when the latter said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" replied, "God will provide." Be that your motto, "God will provide."

Fear God, and you may without scruple and with confidence adopt this assurance.

Permit me now to suggest some topics which apply alike to all these different cases, and which it is important you should dwell upon, either in prospect of leaving home, or when you have left it.

Consider it is in the order of Providence you should be thus situated. Your lot is fixed in heaven. It is God's will, and not chance. Is there nothing consolatory in this? Consider his wisdom, power, and goodness. He does all things well. He knows what is best for you. He may, in ways which you cannot imagine, be consulting your future and permanent good. You see not the end. When this is revealed, you may be compelled to exclaim, "He leadeth the blind by a way that they know not, and leadeth them in paths that they have not known. He maketh darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." Submit, therefore, without envying others, and without murmuring. Would you contravene his purpose? Say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight. I am where he would have me be."

But remember, there are not only privations to be endured away from home, but moral dangers also to be encountered. If these are not so pressing in your case as in that of your brothers, there are some perils even in yours. Happily for you, the guards of female decorum, propriety, and reputation, are stronger and stricter than those of the other sex. But they have proved too weak for absolute security in thousands of instances. Multitudes who have stood well at home, have unhappily fallen, when removed from it. Eve was tempted when alone, and away from the protection of her husband.

Alas, how many have gone away to sin, and have returned to hide their shame. A mother's watchful eye is no longer upon you; a father's arm is no longer stretched over you: and the shelter of home no longer protects you. Others know this as well as you, and may take advantage of it. And even if there were no danger of vice, is there none of imprudence, folly, levity? None of bad connections, improper acquaintance, ill-contracted marriages? None of Sabbath breaking, of undue love of pleasure, of vanity? Are not the prevailing faults and defects of some women to be found in vanity, love of dress, disposition to court attention and admiration, fickleness, inconsiderateness, love of novelty, want of judgment, and curiosity? And are not all these likely to increase rather than diminish, when they are away from the checks which home supplies? Are not these weeds likely to grow faster, and to attain greater strength, when there is no mother's eye to see them, no mother's hand to pluck them up? All this danger is greatly heightened in the case of those who have personal or mental accomplishments. A beautiful young woman, withdrawn from the fostering care and ceaseless vigilance of a judicious mother, and exposed abroad to the rude and licentious gaze of the world, is ever an object of alarm to her friends, and it were well if she were so to herself. It is perhaps a rare case for such a female to be ignorant of her charms; it is rarer still for her to be more afraid than vain of them, and to be more anxious that they should not lead her into danger, than that they should secure for her admiration.

The great source of consolation and protection to a young woman from home is true religion. It is very easy for any one, to conceive of the privations and dis-

comfort of many a young person, on leaving the comforts of a happy home to sustain the character of a governess, a shopwoman or a servant. The cold, proud, and perhaps in some cases cruel, treatment of employers, as contrasted with the affectionate conduct of parents: the annoying and unfeeling peculiarities of companions in the house, are contrasted with the sympathising and loving behaviour of their brothers and sisters; the disregard of their comfort, in all that concerns their food, lodging, and general personal convenience, as contrasted with all the accommodations and enjoyments of their father's house; and the general inattention and neglect of the strangers among whom they dwell, as contrasted with the recognition and kind notice of a wide circle of friends in their own native place; this, all this, is bitter indeed. Some hard and unfeeling natures, or gay and frivolous ones, may be insensible to these things; but oh, that poor girl of softer mould, whose heart was made for home scenes, and whose bliss was derived from home enjoyments; under all this, her heart is sometimes ready to burst! What thoughts disturb her peace, like visions of bliss lighting on her gloomy and sorrowful path, and then instantly vanishing, only to leave the path still more gloomy, and the darkness still more oppressive! What letters, wet with her tears, she writes to her own sweet home, and to her sympathising parents!

What is to comfort her? Only the balmy influence of religion, the consciousness that she is in the way of duty, and the testimony of her conscience that she is discharging her obligations with scrupulous fidelity. This can and this will do it. She whose heart is renewed by Divine grace; who has genuine faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; who walks with God as her divine,

unchangeable, omnipotent Friend, and communes with him as her Heavenly Father; whose affections are set on things above; and who considers life as a probation for eternity; she will find in such a state of mind, a source of consolation, a means of endurance, an element of happiness, which will counterbalance all discomfort, disquietude, and distress. With true dignity she will bow to the will of God, and consider her situation as his appointment. She will find satisfaction in submission. Her religion will impart much patience, and something of cheerfulness: it will control her temper, and throw an air of loveliness over her character, which will give her an interest in the heart of her employer. She will ever find companions in her Bible and other good books, in her closet of devotion and in communion with God, a sweet retreat from the coldness and unkindness of her fellow-creatures; and in meditation upon the everlasting rest above, a blessed substitute for the comforts of the home she has left on earth. Faith in God, in Christ, in Providence, in heaven, can comfort, has comforted, and will comfort in the dreariest situations of life, and in the bitterest agonies of death. I am anxious all should set out in life with this lofty idea of true piety, that it can sweeten the bitterest cup of human woe; can soften the hardest lot; and can be a substitute for all other pleasures. It must be so; for it made Adam happy in paradise, and makes saints and angels happy in heaven. It has lighted, as with a lamp kindled in heaven, the confessor's dungeon, has sustained the Christian fugitive in his exile, and has enabled the martyrs to endure even the agonies of the stake.

Adopt religion, then, young women, as your companion, for it will not only comfort you, but also protect

you. Yes, it will be a shield for your defence, as well as a cup of consolation amidst your sorrows. Expect temptations, for you will certainly have them in one way or other. You cannot imagine in what shape or from what quarter they will come. It may be in a form so fascinating, so plausible, so unsuspected, so insidious, as to contain all the "deceivableness of unrighteousness." Do not imagine that Satan respects female virtue too much to assail it. Did he thus respect the holiness of Eve in the garden of Eden? Does he reverence any character or any virtue; did he not tempt our Lord? The more spotless the character, and the more eminent the excellence, the more intense is his hatred, the more malignant his envy, and the more eager his desire to despoil it. Has he not tempted to their ruin multitudes as pure as you are? Against such a foe, whom all but infinite cunning makes skilful, and boundless success makes bold, consider you are safe only under the protection of Omnipotence: and that protection can be obtained only by faith and prayer. Of those millions of instances of female frailty, which the history of your sex has presented, not one would have occurred, if they had trusted their virtue to the keeping of true godliness. It is religion that will repel the fiercest assault with the holy and indignant remonstrance, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

It is not only however from such dangers as these, dangers affecting moral character in its most important features, that religion will protect you; but from the lesser ones also, which, if they do not lead to vice, are still injurious. Religion will moderate your love of pleasure by furnishing pleasures of its own. It will check your vanity and folly, by producing a devout seriousness and

sobriety of mind, without at all destroying your natural and innocent vivacity. It will remove your inconsiderateness, and make you thoughtful and reflective, without stiffening you into formality, or investing you with gloom. It will induce habits of forethought, and frugality, and thus guard you from present imprudence and recklessness, and future improvidence and extravagance. Do not then venture out into the world unprotected by this spirit as your guardian angel.

There are one or two other cautions which it may be of importance you should receive and remember. You should never allow yourselves for a moment to imagine there is anything dishonourable or degrading in your being compelled to leave home and to support yourself, either as governess, shopwoman, or servant. Those who have been in better circumstances are of course most apt to feel this. And no doubt it is a descent, a lower status, according to the conventionalities of human life; but it is no dishonour. It is from misconduct, and not from misfortune; from loss of character, and not from loss of rank, that disgrace arises. Nobility of soul is often associated with plebeian descent; while vulgarity of character is sometimes covered with the coronet or the crown. A virtuous, holy, and intelligent young female has, in the heraldry of heaven, a patent of nobility, and is one of God's peeresses in her own right. Industry is far more honourable than wealthy indolence; and she who willingly, honestly, and cheerfully earns her own support, when Providence has deprived her of her patrimony, is far more to be admired than she would have been, had she throughout life rolled in her father's equipage, and been surrounded by every luxury.

Akin to this is another state of mind against which you should most sedulously guard, and that is a conviction that you must be miserable away from home. It is conceded that you cannot be as happy away from home, as you would be at home. It is not right you should be. There can be no perfect substitute for a united and happy family circle. But when called by Providence to surrender it, give it up with submission and fortitude, and yield to the privation with true magnanimity. Let it be said of you on leaving, as is said by Milton of Eve on her departure from Paradise,

"Some natural tears she dropped, but wiped them soon."

Weep you may, and you ought, at giving up the dear delights you have enjoyed from childhood in your father's house; and you cannot but sometimes feel pensive at recollecting the friends from whom you have been separated. But to allow your love of home to make absence from it intolerable wretchedness; to render you moody and melancholy, discontented and ill-tempered; to unfit you for business, and make you unpleasant to your employer and companions; exhibits a weak mind, a feeble heart, and a sickly character. Rise above this. If Providence calls you away from home, bear it with composure. Go out expecting to meet with privations, and make up your mind to endure them with fortitude. Make the best of your situation. Doom not yourself to misery on this account. You may be happy anywhere, with religion, good temper, submission to your lot, and usefulness. If you determine to find out such pleasures as your present situation affords, instead of always looking back upon that which you have left; if you resolve, by God's

grace, to please and be pleased; if you give up your mind to piety, industry, and usefulness; you will find that felicity is a flower that blooms, and a fruit that grows, away from home as well as at home. A cheerful spirit, like a lamp lighting any darkness into which it may be carried, lessens the discomfort of any situation, recommends you to your employer, and promotes your interest as well as your happiness.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to say a few things on the choice of a situation, and they appertain to your parents, where they are living, as well as to yourselves. Let the subject be made the matter of earnest and believing prayer to God. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." "Commit thy way to him, and he shall bring it to pass." These are precious declarations, and they are sustained by promises no less precious. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." With such exhortations and assurances, what should be your resolution? "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." There is Providence in everything. Even your mean affairs are under Divine direction. Your times are in his hand. Do not doubt it. Hold fast the truth that God hears your prayer, casts your lot, and fixes the bounds of your habitation. Pray, pray earnestly, believingly, and expectingly. All situations and all hearts are at his disposal.

In selecting, accepting, and retaining a situation, consult its religious advantages. In these are included such means of pulpit religious instruction as are likely to build up a young disciple on her holy faith, and to

quicken into activity the principles of godliness planted in her soul by the Spirit of God. It is not ordinarily desirable, where a selection can be made, to choose a situation where even the minor matters of the sacraments and church government differ from those to which you have been accustomed. This exposes you, if not to a change of sentiment, yet to antagonism and perplexity, which are unfavourable to the quiet enjoyment of your own personal religion, and may do you injury by producing a spirit of controversy. Where the differences of opinion are of a more serious kind, affecting even the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, no pious young person should expose herself to any hazard of this kind.

I will now address a few special counsels and cautions to two or three classes of those who are in the circumstances contemplated by this discourse.

Many are occupied in the very important and responsible duties of a resident governess. This is a situation of delicacy, difficulty, and momentous consequence; and requires much wisdom, prudence, and conscientiousness. There are many parties concerned, all of whose interests and comfort should and must be consulted. You who are in this situation owe something to yourself. Those who have engaged you, will be most likely to pay you the respect due to you when they see you respecting yourself. If they so far confide in you as to intrust you with the education of their children, they ought to treat you in such a manner as to teach them also to confide in you and esteem you. But this will depend much upon your own conduct and bearing. Let them be duly aware that you expect all that is your due in the way of kind and respectful conduct, but that

you expect no more. Any apprehension on their part that your demands in this respect are too high, or are preferred in an obtrusive and exacting spirit, will be sure to set them on their guard against you as a person of encroaching disposition, and will dispose them to yield you less than you are entitled to. A kind, attentive, respectful, and dignified bearing towards them, as far from servility on the one hand, as it is from familiarity on the other, as well as a right behaviour towards their children, will in most cases accomplish all you wish. If you have taken your present situation, after coming down in life, let there be no such sense of degradation and mortified pride, no such hauteur or loftiness as will make you gloomy, dissatisfied, unhappy, and repulsive. Even should it appear that you have exchanged places with your employers, that they once were in the situation of inferiority which you now occupy, give no evidence that you are aware of it, and take no notice of little ebullitions of vulgarity, or even purse-proud insolence, not uncommon to those who have risen in life. If sometimes you cannot be insensible to this, and you feel your spirit rising within you, and your cheek growing flushed and warm, so that your mortification cannot be concealed, call in religion to your aid; comfort yourself in God; and exemplify the Christian in a spirit of meek forbearance. In such circumstances, many a tearful look will be thrown back by memory on that home from which you have been driven by misfortune, or rather by Providence, and you will need to retire to calm your perturbation and repress your indignation. In such cases, go and by prayer invite the hand of your Heavenly Father to wipe your weeping eyes, and compose your ruffled spirit and agitated heart.

Then there are the children entrusted to your care for their education. Enter upon your task with a deep and solemn sense of responsibility to them, to their parents, and to God. Abhor the meanness, injustice, and cruelty, of being satisfied with any manner of discharging your duty, so that you get your board and salary, and respectful treatment. The future character and comfort, for both worlds, of those girls, depend much upon you. They have been placed in your hands, and look up to you as their instructress and oracle. As you would give in your account at last to God with joy and not with grief, do your very uttermost; tax your energies to do them and their parents justice, in instructing their minds, forming their characters, and fitting them for the station they are to occupy in life. Prepare yourself for your task by constant reading and study. Do not be satisfied with your present qualifications. The education of a rational and immortal creature, for this world and the next, is a great work. Improve your own mind, to be better fitted to improve theirs. Win their confidence by your ability; their affection by your kindness; their reverence by your dignity; and their application by your own diligence. Let your aim be, not only to communicate knowledge, but wisdom; not only to store the memory, but to strengthen the judgment, to nerve the will, and to make the conscience tender; not only to teach them to think correctly, but to act with propriety, discretion, and promptness, in any situation in which they may be placed.

As regards religion, that of course must depend much upon the views of the parents. If they are similar to your own, and you have unrestricted liberty on this

point, labour to the uttermost to form the religious character of your youthful charge. Ever consider the education of an immortal being incomplete without instruction in that which alone can fit her for immortality. But never act the part of a covert zealot by inculcating principles opposed to those of the parents. I should say to a religious young woman, go into no situation where you are not allowed to teach what you consider to be the truth as it is in Jesus. Do not conceal your sentiments, and then teach them secretly and stealthily. You would abhor such conduct in a Romanist: do not be guilty of it yourself. Of course you should not, and cannot conscientiously teach what you believe to be error; therefore do not go where you would be required to do so.

Then come the parents to be considered by you. Of course you will do everything you can to uphold their authority, even as they ought to do their uttermost to uphold yours. You should also most assiduously labour to secure the affections of their children for them, rather than for yourself. It would be treachery of the basest kind to steal away the hearts of their children. Your aim should be to secure the love of the children to you, for their parents' sake, as well as your own; and then their love to their parents, for your own sake as well as theirs.

There is another thing to be observed, and one which I shall touch upon with the delicacy it demands; and that is the fact, that a wife has sometimes been made uncomfortable by the presence of a governess. Jealousy, it is true, is sometimes in this case suspicious without reason. But are there no cases in which such uneasiness is not entirely the result of an over-sensitive

and morbid imagination? Respect your own character and dignity, the wife's peace and the husband's honour, too much ever to seek or accept attentions which, from him, even though playful and innocent, may excite uneasiness in that one bosom, the tranquillity of which is so easily disturbed by any act of his. Conduct yourself so as to be not without blame, but without suspicion.

Apart from this, do nothing by becoming the depository of secrets, hearing tales, or uttering insinuations, to loosen the bonds, or violate the affection, of the husband and wife, or to disturb the peace of the family. If unhappily, a difference should exist, keep yourself as much as possible out of the way of witnessing it, or let your wisest and kindest offices be exerted to heal the breach. Win for yourselves the blessing which will come upon the peacemaker, and cause the family to bless the hour which made you a member of their household. Recollect you are bound in honour never to make the transactions or condition of the family, matter of conversation with others. Without being actually sworn or even pledged to secresy, you are solemnly bound to observe it; you are a traitress to the family which has received you as an inmate, if you make their affairs known to others. Never intermeddle with the servants, and especially avoid all unnecessary familiarity with them. Keep to your own sphere, and diligently discharge your own duties. You will find sufficient scope there for all your time, your energies, and your anxiety.

To maintain a course of conduct, seek by prayer the grace and wisdom which come from on high, and under all the trials of your situation, whether the waywardness

of the children, or the ingratitude, pride, or petulance of the parents, seek the comfort which comes from the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation.

Governesses in a school are a class of young females, who, though acting under the direction and supervision of another, and therefore with less responsibility than those who reside in a family, have to discharge very important duties, for which high qualifications, both intellectual and moral, are essential.

I next consider the case of those young persons who are employed in retail shops, and they form a very large class. Their situation is often one of far greater discomfort and moral danger than that of the class just mentioned. In addition to the oppressive and exhausting labour which modern competition imposes upon them, in common with all who are engaged in trade, they have to bear in some cases the unkindness of their employers, who are not unfrequently deplorably wanting in regard to the comfort of those whom they have received into their service, as to their food, lodging, and general treatment. A surly master and his unfeeling wife, intent only upon what they can get out of the flesh, bone, and muscle of their servants, and caring little for their welfare; never satisfied with even the most exemplary diligence and competent ability, and therefore ever urging to greater labour, and ever uttering the language of complaint; always suspicious, even where there is no ground for it, of the honesty of their servants, such are the trials which some of these hapless young people have to bear. In such a case, you who have to endure it, need comfort. The recollections of home, where all was kindness, happiness, and confidence, embitter, by the power of contrast, the ills you

have to sustain. Bear all with as much patience as you can command. Seek consolation in true piety. Carry your sorrows to God by prayer. When the bitter contrast between your position when at home and your present situation from home forces itself upon your thoughts, and sends a tear to your eye and a pang to your heart, go to Him whose gracious presence is ever with you, and whose infinite love is ever ready for you.

But it is not thus with all shopkeepers. I am not describing the class, but only some of its members; the exceptions, rather than the rule. I know heads of retail establishments, employing a large number of young people, who cherish for them something of the feelings of parents, and regard them almost in the light of children: nor is it their temporal comfort exclusively, but also their spiritual welfare, which is the object of their solicitude. And this is obviously the incumbent duty of employers.

Whether your employers be generous and kind, or neglectful and oppressive, do your duty; and seek to possess all the qualifications which will commend you to their esteem. Diligence is indispensable. It is the first excellence of one in your situation. Be anxious to please, and as earnest to serve your employer as if the business were your own. No one will or can employ an indolent servant. Be an early riser. Comply with all the rules of the shop. Aim at excellence. Seek to be clever. Cultivate an attractive, winning, and even polite address. Be in the best sense of the term a clever shopwoman. Especially let your honesty be above suspicion. Deem it no insult or reproach that I caution you on this subject; you are exposed to temptation. Money in small sums is continually passing through your hands,

your salary is low, and through the deceitfulness of the heart you may dwell on the injustice of your small stipend, until you imagine it lawful to pay yourself, and make up what you should in justice receive. Resist every temptation of this kind. Rather starve and die, than appropriate to your own use an article of clothing or decoration, or a farthing of money belonging to your employer. As a guard upon your integrity, and a check to temptation, avoid expense in dress and ornament. Vanity is insatiable, and has led more persons into dishonesty than any other passion. A taste for finery fostered and indulged, with a salary too small to yield the means of its gratification, has in innumerable instances led to acts of pilfering to supply the deficiency.

In some establishments, young persons of both sexes are employed. Where this is the case it brings new perils, and requires additional caution. Your honour, your respectability, your safety, require that you should be most anxiously upon your guard. How earnestly as well as sincerely should you present those beautiful petitions of our Lord's prayer, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil." Avoid all undue familiarity, all flippant and trifling conduct, all jocularity, with the young men employed in the same establishment. Maintain a proper self-respect, a becoming reserve, and a dignified bearing; they will be a fence round your character, and prevent even the approach of anything that would insult your purity, or offend the most fastidious modesty.

You have need to be upon your guard against the influence of companions even of your own sex. In large and even in moderate establishments many young women are associated together, without in some cases, any

matronly superintendent being placed over them, and with almost unrestricted opportunities for free conversation and general intercourse. It is no severe reflection on the sex to suppose that in such a number of young persons, there may be some who have no personal religion, whose sense of female decorum and propriety is not the most delicate, and who, without being vicious, are still so given to levity, vanity, and romance, as to exert an unfavourable influence over the rest. Be upon your guard against influence of this kind. Gain all the good you can, from those who are your associates; but avoid all the evil. Be good tempered, accommodating, amiable, and conciliatory; but set yourself against all that is improper. Be an example of all that is good, and then you may be a reprover of all that is evil. Let there be no affected superiority; nothing like, "Stand by, I am holier than thou;" but all the consistency, gentleness and sweetness of unaffected goodness, of true piety, and good conduct, and then you may be a blessing to those around you. Be especially careful in the selection of a particular friend from the rest of your companions. Be not led away by specious appearances, nor induced to commit yourself by professions of friendship on the part of another, or by the first feelings of partiality on your own; but take time to ascertain the correctness of her principles, the consistency of her conduct, and the respectability of her family: otherwise you may be led into snares and dangers which you very little anticipate.

For your conduct towards your employers, if a master, I refer you to what I have said to the Governess. Instances have occurred within my knowledge to prove that cautions on this head are not altogether unnecessary. An evil eye has sometimes lighted on an unsuspecting

female, and men bound by every tie of honour, and by their solemn vow to a wife, have been base enough to assail, and in some instances to destroy, the purity, the honour, and the peace, of those whom they were bound in duty to protect. Spurn then with disdain and indignation any such attempts, receive no special attentions, and quit the service of the wretch whom you suspect of a design against that which ought to be dearer to you a thousand times over, than even life itself.

Female servants are a most important and a very numerous class of young women away from home, and often a very destitute and much exposed one. Their case however is so needful of enlarged counsel and caution that I inserted in the "Family Monitor" a chapter to meet it, and reprinted it separately as a tract.

I shall now conclude this chapter by some few general remarks, which will apply alike to all classes of those who are away from home.

Again and again I say, commit yourselves by true faith in Christ into the hands of God for protection and consolation. How many beautiful passages and examples of holy Scripture, in addition to those already quoted, could be adduced, which apply with peculiar force to your case. Look at poor Hagar, who was much to be pitied as well as much to be blamed, alone in the wilderness, "when the angel of the Lord found her by the fountain of water, and she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." If, when God found her there, notwithstanding some past misconduct and self-reproach, she comforted herself in that desolate place with the consideration that she was compassed about with the presence of the Lord; with

how much greater confidence and peace may you cheer your heart with the thought of an ever-present God, you who have not been driven out as she was by misconduct from your home, but have been led out from it by Providence. Yes, God is in every place, he is with you, "he compasseth your path, he knoweth your down-sitting and up-rising, and is acquainted with all your ways.' You have left your earthly father, but your heavenly one is with you. You are far from your earthly home, but if you are a Christian, you are as near as ever to your heavenly one. The eyes that lately beamed affection upon you, see you not now, and you see not them; but lifting your voice to God, you can say, "Thou God seest me." His eye is upon you, his heart yearns over you, his arms are underneath you. Then, what promises are on record for you. Do you fear the want of adequate provision? "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Do you want protection? "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Do you need direction? "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." Do you dread the forlorn circumstances that await you away from home? "None that trust in him shall be desolate." Are you trembling with apprehension at the absence of all who were dear to you, and the unknown difficulties of your new situation on earth? "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will

help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "My presence shall go with you and give you rest." Do you ever dread the idea of being forgotten by the friends you are leaving? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Can any thing be more consolatory than such assurances? Need you be afraid to leave home and go out into the world with such promises? What, when omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, all-sufficiency, and boundless love, go with you? Why, with such assurances you may quit not only your father's home to dwell in any other part of this land of railways and easy and speedy methods of conveyance; but may embark on board an emigrant ship, quit your native country for the antipodes, and exultingly exclaim, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." But then to apply the truth and feel the comfort of these precious assurances, you must have that genuine faith which alone gives you a title to them. Personal religion will, in all probability, procure you earthly friends wherever you go, for it is the soil in which all those virtues grow that conciliate affection, ensure respect, and invite confidence. God will go before you to prepare the way for you, for when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh "even his enemies to be at peace with him." Remember how he gave Joseph favour in the eyes of the governor of the prison: and how he turned the heart of Esau, brooding over purposes

of revenge, into brotherly endearment. The best way to get the friendship of man is first to secure the friendship of God.

Connected with this, acquire in an eminent degree the general good qualities which I have already alluded to. Add to piety amiability of disposition, kindliness of temper, gentle, artless, and attractive manners. Let there be a substratum of the solid gold of excellence, bearing at the same time the polish of the amenities of life. Those who have to make their way in the world must be attentive to external, and to what some may call, little things. It is not enough to be holy and virtuous, or even to be conscious that you are such, but you must also be attractive. You must aim to please. Real excellence may sometimes be repulsive on account of eccentricities, acerbities, and blunt coarseness, with which it is associated. It is like grapes amidst nettles or thorns, which few will attempt to gather for fear of the sting or the prickle. There is a word of very difficult definition, but which, without being defined, is perfectly understood, and very impressive, "She is an interesting young woman." This is a very common expression. Perhaps the best explanation of it is the power of giving pleasure and engaging affection. This includes, I am aware, more of nature than of art, and something of personal attraction. A manifest intention to secure the favour of an individual is almost sure to defeat its own end and to inspire disgust. But the general good opinion of those amongst whom we live, can in most cases be secured by attention to their wishes, and consideration for their feelings. And surely it cannot be improper to ask, "How can I interest others in my behalf?" And those who depend upon the interest they

create for themselves in the hearts of others, should study how to ensure it.

Combine a due and tender recollection of home with a noble fortitude in surrendering its comforts. You are not required to forget your father's house, and your mother's endearing society. You would be unnatural if you could. Indeed you are in little danger of this. "Forget thee, my honoured father! Forget thee, my much loved mother! Forget you, my brothers and sisters! Forget thee, sweet home of my childhood! Oh no. Memory must perish before I can be guilty of such oblivion. I muse on you all in my solitary walks. I give up many an hour's sleep to think of home. I wet my pillow with my tears, as I think of the years and joys that are gone, never to return. I dream often that I am in the midst of you all, and wake to the sad reality that I am away from home." But these are not the only thoughts you are to cherish as to your home. Nor is the frequent and affectionate letter, so welcome and so precious to those who love and think of you, the only way to send comfort to your parents. Let there be the never-varying excellence of character and conduct, the uniform good behaviour, the growing usefulness, which on their knowing of them, shall comfort their hearts. Avoid that fickleness which would make you soon tired of a situation; let no unsuitable connection of a tender nature, which they would not approve, be formed; let no conduct, which if they knew it, would distress them, be carried on by you. They have lost the comfort of your society; add not to the affliction by causing them to lose the comfort of your character.

Let your situation in a social point of view remind

you of your circumstances in a religious one. If you are a true Christian, what are you here upon earth but a child away from home? Yes: heaven, and not earth, is the home of the believer. How simply and sublimely beautiful is the language of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Delightful idea! Heaven is the home of the Christian, which the Saviour has fitted up and made ready for him. There, is God the Judge of all; the Father, of whom the whole family is named. There, is Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, who calls himself the First-born, the Elder Brother. There, are the spirits of the just made perfect, the brothers and sisters. There, is the innumerable company of the angels, the ministering spirits now sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation. What a glorious household assembled in the third heavens, the eternal home of the Redeeming God, the Great Redeemer, and the redeemed family! Thither you are going, if a true believer. All the dispensations of Providence and all the means of grace are preparing you for that state. All things, and among them your present situation, with all its disquiet and discomfort, are working together for your good. You are away from home here, that you may be at home there. Let this cheer and comfort you. When distressed by looking back upon the home you have left, comfort yourself by looking on to that to which you are going. Heaven, glory, eternity, are before you. You are educating for your Father's house; preparing to go

in and dwell for ever in his presence. Half a century hence at most, and in perhaps a much shorter time than that, it will be of no consequence to you whether you passed through life agreeably or not. The only thing about which you should be supremely anxious is, not to be shut our from the heavenly home: not to be excluded by sin, impenitence, and unbelief, from the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare. In the blessed hope of reaching that state, you might endure, not only with fortitude but with comfort, all the trials of a young woman away from home, though they were ten times greater than they are.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARACTER OF REBEKAH.

And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down into the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. So I drank, and she made the camels drink also. GENESIS XXIV, 45, 46.

EVERY one must be struck, I should think, with the narratives in the book of Genesis, and their correspondence to the state of society to which they relate. Their verisimilitude guarantees their truthfulness, and explains their peculiarity. We find all that charming simplicity which is in keeping with the primæval life of the persons referred to; together with all the defects in their conduct, which their partial instruction might be expected to bring with it. Another kind of narrative, more in conformity with the advance and artificial refinement of modern society, would excite suspicion of the truthfulness of the story.

Where shall we find in all the range of fiction any thing so exquisite as the history of Joseph; or even as the beautiful story which furnishes the example to be

contemplated in this chapter? I invite those accustomed to criticism and endowed with taste to the investigation of this portion of Holy Writ. True, it relates rather to the history of a family than of a nation. And it is worthy of remark, that the Spirit of God preserved in the inspired chronicles this little gem of historic narrative, rather than the record of anything going on at that time among the great kingdoms of antiquity, not excepting Egypt, the birthplace and cradle of science. The secular historian delights to emblazon his page with the conflicts of empire, the exploits of heroes, and the prowess of armies: but what is the influence of such records upon the moral habits, social happiness, and individual character of mankind, compared with that of the story of the holy courtship of Isaac and Rebekah?

Sarah, the beloved and faithful wife of Abraham, had died, and been laid in the cave of Machpelah. Sadness and desolation were reigning in the patriarch's household. His tent was empty; the grief of Isaac, who loved his mother most tenderly, was unsoothed; and upon him the heart of the venerable widower was now turned with more concentrated affection. Isaac, the miraculous child of promise, though forty years of age, was unmarried. The holy patriarch, amidst much domestic disquiet, the consequence of polygamy, had known the happiness of possessing a faithful and devoted wife, and he now became naturally anxious to see his beloved son in possession of a companion in life, before he himself should go the way of all flesh. His solicitude however was not merely that Isaac should be married, but well married; which in his view meant not wealthily, but religiously. He was a worshipper of Jehovah, and ab-

horred idolatry, by the votaries of which he was on every hand surrounded; and it pierced his heart with anguish to think of the child of his love contracting a marriage with one of them. He knew that his character as well as his happiness depended upon his choice. Moreover it was not only a private matter of personal and family arrangement, involving Isaac's happiness and the comfort of his father, but also a public concern, intimately affecting the covenant which the Almighty had entered into with him, and the countless millions who were to be blessed in his seed. Isaac sustained a sacred character, he was the child of promise, and inherited, and was to transmit, the promises concerning the Messiah. As Abraham had relatives in the land of Mesopotamia who worshipped the living God, he determined to send his confidential servant to engage a wife for Isaac from their family. We must suppose of course that all this was with the knowledge of Isaac and met with his cordial consent, though parental authority was then more extensive, and filial submission to it, more exemplary, than they now are. Parents, in those times, chose wives for their sons, and husbands for their daughters; and often were regulated in their choice more by regard to wealth and rank than by the adaptation and affection of the parties to be united. I do not wish this custom to be revived, it is unnatural, and reduces marriage to a matter of bargain and sale. But I do wish parental counsel, consent, and approbation, to be always sought in a matter of so much importance to all parties concerned whether directly or remotely.

The trusty servant selected by Abraham proceeded on his mission, so delicate, difficult, and momentous to both the father and son. Not however till religious

solemnities had been observed, and the patriarch had commended Eliezer to God by prayer. If we wanted the character of a faithful servant delineated to the life, where could we find a picture so perfect as this man? I shall not follow him through his long and wearisome journey of nearly five hundred miles, nor will I dwell upon the anxious ruminations of his mind during the weeks it occupied. Yet I cannot but imagine how constantly that mind was lifted up to God for protection, direction, and success. He at length arrived at the city of his destination. It was a summer evening, and espying a well outside the walls, he stopped to give his camels drink before he passed through the gates. Aware that it was the custom for the young women to come and draw water for household purposes, he first placed his camels by the well, and then betook himself to prayer for Divine direction. "And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." It is noticeable that he did not fix upon the one who should first offer her services, but upon the one who should first willingly grant the service asked of her. In this he proceeded wisely, conceiving, it would seem, that a maid who tendered unasked, to a stranger, even so slight a service as a draught of water at a public well,

shewed no maidenly spirit; and deeming perhaps that such attention might be an excuse for curiosity, and an evidence rather of officious forwardness, than of an obliging disposition. Eliezer's conduct in all this is worthy of notice, as furnishing a beautiful comment upon Solomon's advice, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths." Let us thus begin, carry on, and end, all our works in God. What is begun in prayer, usually, as in this case, ends in praise. So thought Eliezer when he knelt down by the side of the well of Nahor, and poured out this simple and beautiful prayer. In his case it no doubt was well, but ordinarily it does not become us to ask, much less to prescribe, special tokens by which God shall indicate his will.

Having presented his prayer, he waited for the answer, and waited in strong faith that he should receive it. He did not wait long. There came a damsel with a pitcher upon her shoulder towards the well. By her appearance, perhaps by an impression from God, he was possessed with the idea that she was the person sought, and that the Lord had answered his prayer. He therefore addressed her in the language which he had resolved to employ, and received the very answer which was to be the sign of her being the object of his mission. Her gentleness, cheerfulness, assiduity, and courtesy, manifested towards a stranger of whom she could have no knowledge, were truly admirable, unmixed and uncorrupted as they were by any unbecoming forwardness or levity. She was frank without being obtrusive, kind without being familiar. She neither ran away affrighted from his presence, for her innocence gave her courage, nor did she step beyond the decorum of her sex, nor

allow her courtesy to infringe upon her modesty. It was well for Rebekah that she did not answer with a proud and haughty contempt, and a surly refusal. "Yes, and it was well for another woman, who long after met another stranger, 'wearied with his journey,' at another well, that when she met his request, 'Give me to drink,' with the surly question, 'How is it that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a Samaritan?' it was well, I say, for her that she had a different person from Abraham's servant to deal with." The words in which Rebekah's answer and conduct are described, paint the scene to the life; "Drink my Lord; and she hasted and let down her pitcher upon her hand. And when she had given him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all the camels." Conduct so amiable overwhelmed Eliezer; and so slow of heart are we to believe in the answer of our prayers, that he, "wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." There are cases in which the mind, like the eye, is lit up by a sudden light. It was so here. Finding at length that she was indeed the object of his journey, he could not repress the feelings of his full heart, but expressed them in two ways. The first has in all ages and in all countries been considered as one inlet to the female heart; that heart, which has at any rate been ever thought "accessible to finery, presents, and praise." "For it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold." But this was not the

only expression of his joy and gratitude, for unrestrained by the presence of Rebekah, "He bowed down his head and worshipped, saying, Blessed be Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth : I being in the way, Jehovah led me to the house of my master's brethren." Did the heart of Rebekah, true to instinctive perception in all such matters, begin to divine what this present and this praise to God meant? Did a thought glance across her mind of the nature of this man's visit to Nahor? Or was the scene beheld by her in awe and wonder at the character and errand of the mysterious stranger? She must have known of her august relation, Abraham, whose name she now heard in prayer from the lips of Eliezer.

But let us for a moment forget Rebekah, to look upon this holy, faithful, loving domestic. Never did piety and fidelity more truly blend the sanctity of the one with the devotedness of the other. Happy master, to have such a servant! Happy servant, to be blessed with such a master!

It is not necessary for me to enter very minutely into the incidents of the scenes which followed. How Rebekah hasted with the intelligence to her father's house, and how Laban her brother went forth to greet the stranger and conduct him to their home. We mark, as if we saw them, the courtesy of the opening interview; the frank interchange of kindly greetings and good offices; the admirable delicacy of the servant's introduction of himself to the family of Bethuel; the servant's impatience to discharge his trust; the simple recital of what the Lord had done for him; and the full developement of the object of his visit. Upon hearing

them, Laban, as the surviving representative of his father, replied, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." This was dependent, as the after part of the narrative shows, upon the damsel's consent. To help to gain this, a second splendid present was prepared for her, of jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. This was, and is still, the oriental custom of contracting all bargains and entering into all covenants, relating to marriage, trade, or politics. Very natural was the remonstrance which the brother, and especially the mother of the bride, addressed to the impatient servant of Abraham, when in the morning he said, "Send me away to my master. And her brother and her mother said, let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." Whether it be a respite of ten days, or as some say, of ten months, or even years, that the mother joined with her son in soliciting, before the daughter should bid her a last adieu, this is a touch of genuine tenderness which we would not willingly lose from the narrative. For it is a narrative which proves its own truth by its being so thoroughly, all throughout, true to nature. Rebekah was now called in and the question put to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Was she deficient in virgin modesty, in prudence, in thoughtfulness? Did she display an unseemly haste to become a wife? Did she venture too carelessly to commit herself and her happiness for life to one of whom she knew nothing but by report? Did she not take the decisive step in the dark, when she consented to peril in such haste the comfort

of her life, upon the truth of the singular embassy that had come to her? In ordinary circumstances I should unquestionably reply to these questions in the affirmative, and I should earnestly recommend to all young females at the present day, and to all who have the care of them, whether parents or guardians, more delay, inquiry, and caution, than were observed in this case. Hasty offers of marriage should be met either by immediate refusal or lengthened consideration. It is too momentous an affair to be decided without much investigation and reflection. But there was a peculiarity here. Something, perhaps, may be justly imputed to the times, but far more to the religious state of Rebekah's mind; a sense of duty overwhelmed a feeling of reluctance, together with every inferior consideration. She was doubtless in the habit of daily intercourse with God, and in fervent prayer had sought Divine direction; she saw an overruling providence; God was in the affair; his finger, visible to the eye of faith, pointed the way in which she should go; and with unhesitating obedience she confessed her readiness to part from all the felicities of home, and seek a distant alliance, at the voice of the Almighty Being to whom she had committed her future destiny. Flattering as the scene before her must have appeared to a worldly eye, the sacrifices she made at this moment of compliance were certainly very considerable. What could have led to such an answer, when standing between the tears of parental and fraternal affection, and the urgency of a mere stranger, the servant too of her future home, but a faith which overcame the world, and dictated her holy resolution. Heaven appointed her journey, and nature pleaded in

vain.* That religion had something to do with it, I have no doubt; that the promptings of the female heart had also some influence, I have as little doubt. "What woman," says Monod, "under a sense of her dependence, has not wished once in her life, for the arm of a man to support her, and his name to shelter her? But at the same time, what woman under the feeling of reserve, has not kept her secret closely shut up within her own bosom, waiting silently till she is sought for, even though she should wait till the hour of her death, hastened, perhaps, in some cases, by that internal fire by which she would be consumed within, rather than suffer it to be blazed abroad. The invariable order of marriage which cedes the initiative to man, and does not accord even the appearance of it to woman, is not a refinement of civilization, it is not even a nicety of the gospel, it is a law imposed on woman in every age, not excepting the most barbarous; and among all people, not excepting the most savage." Rebekah partook of this feeling, but she worshipped the true God, and lived amidst those who worshipped idols, where perhaps few opportunities of a holy union presented themselves; and now one offered, in which was combined all that piety could desire, and even vanity crave; she therefore required little or no time to deliberate upon it, and at once consented to accompany the servant of Abraham. Rebekah took leave of her friends, and proceeded on her eventful journey under the care of Eliezer, and accompanied, both for her comfort and her protection, by Deborah, an old and faithful servant who had nursed her from a child.

* See Dr. Cox's "Female Scripture Biography."

For a moment we leave her, proceeding on her journey, to speak of her future husband, of whom good Bishop Hall says, "Of all the patriarchs, none made so little noise in the world as Isaac; none lived either so privately, or so innocently; neither know I whether he proved himself a better son or husband. For the one he gave himself over to the knife of his father when about to be offered up in sacrifice, and mourned three years for his mother; for the other he reserved himself in chaste forbearance twenty years and prayed." He appears to have been a quiet, retiring, domestic, and devotional character; good, rather than great, and altogether blameless, with the exception that he was a little too much addicted to the gratification of his palate. "It is a calm and peaceful summer evening. The oxen have been lodged in their stalls, and the implements of husbandry are at rest in the furrows of the field. Not a breath of wind rustles in the noiseless leaves. Not a stray sheep wanders in the dark shadow of the hills. It is a time of profound repose. One solitary figure is seen slowly pacing the sweet-scented meadow path. Unconscious of nature's charms, although his soul is melted into sweet harmony with the peace that reigns all around, he is wrapt in holy fellowship with the God of his salvation."* It is Isaac, "who had gone out into the fields to meditate." No improper oratory for the good man, who, surrounded by the glories of creation, looks through nature up to nature's God. In such an exercise and such a frame of mind, Isaac was well prepared to receive the best possible earthly blessing, a good wife. Perhaps he was then meditating upon Eliezer's mission, and beseeching heaven for its

* Dr. Candlish on Genesis.

success. Behold the answer of his prayers! A cavalcade is seen in the distance approaching. It draws nearer and nearer. Can it be the return of Eliezer, the faithful servant? And are there not two females in the retinue, one young and the other far advanced in life? The vision of his future wife now flashed through his imagination as the procession drew nearer, and his eyes with fixed attention rested upon the beauteous form of Rebekah. "And who," says Rebekah, whose eyes are as busy in looking towards Canaan as Isaac's are in the direction of Mesopotamia, "is that meditative man approaching us?" The secret is disclosed by the faithful, joyful Eliezer. "My master, Isaac." As she approached her destined lord, see how female delicacy, and maiden diffidence and reserve, resume their empire. "She alighted off the camel; and took a veil and covered herself." This act had more meanings than one, it expressed her subjection as his already espoused wife, to him as her future husband: it would also prevent that confusion which the suddenness of the interview and the important consequences that were to follow it, would naturally produce. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." In this tender manner does this admirable story close.

Peace be to that dwelling, the residence of a dutiful son and a tender husband, and of a kind, generous, open-hearted, pious wife. Dutiful sons promise to be affectionate husbands: and were I a woman, and received an offer of marriage, one of the first enquiries I would make concerning the man who solicited my hand and heart, would be "How did he behave to his mother?"

feeling assured that conjugal affection could scarcely be expected to dwell in that heart from which filial regard had been excluded. He who is insensible to a mother's tender affection, believe me, my young friends, is not to be entrusted with the care of a woman's heart and happiness. "We may here pause and remark that all the circumstances continue to make this portion of the sacred record peculiarly attractive. In reading it we feel at home amid these patriarchal incidents and descriptions, realising them as if they were familiar. The stately pomp and ceremony, reserve and coldness and suspicion of a more artificial social state pass away. The freshness of nature's early truth and tenderness returns, artless, guileless, fearless. We breathe a purer and freer air. We are touched with a deeper sense at once of a special Providence in heaven, and of a real and true sympathy on earth. We feel that there can be such a thing as the exercise of a frank and generous trust, relying both upon God and upon man; and that it is possible to act upon the belief both of God's superintendence and of man's sincerity."

Before we consider what is to be learnt from the conduct of Rebekah as a wife and a mother, we will for a few moments contemplate her in reference to the act which made her such, her marriage. The circumstances connected with this were peculiar to the times, and partook of a simplicity, as I have already remarked, to which your history is not likely to supply a parallel. One thing, however, may be noticed, it was with the privity and consent of her friends. I cannot account for the fact of Bethuel, Rebekah's father, being passed over in silence, and Laban her brother only being mentioned as conducting the transaction, except upon the

supposition that Bethuel was dead. It is true the name occurs once in the history, but this probably was a brother. But Laban was consulted. There was nothing clandestine in the affair. And moreover it was a marriage in which the claims of religion were considered. On this delicate subject I cannot enlarge. If Rebekah had showed too great an eagerness for quitting the single state, and somewhat too hasty a decision, we do not recommend this to you; from this however we have exculpated her. It may be natural enough to prefer the married to the unmarried state, when an opportunity offers for entering into it. But let not your minds be unduly restless and anxious in realising the object of your wishes. Avoid all romantic and poetic imaginativeness on this momentous affair. Do not allow yourselves ever to treat it with levity, or to sustain or adopt a line of conduct which would look as if you were more anxious to be a wife than to be qualified for such a state. Never come to the conclusion that you cannot be happy if you are not married, and cannot but be happy if you are. Let the multitude of happy maidens and the equal number of unhappy wives, correct such mistakes, and dispel all the illusions with which the idea of marriage disturbs the propriety of some young women's conduct. Treat the whole subject, not as a matter of poetry and romance, but as one of the gravest realities of life. It is an affair of love, but it is also an affair of prudence. It is a matter of taste, and even of poetic delightedness; but it is also a matter of judgment and of conscience. It is not a thing to be laughed and joked about, but to be pondered in the deepest recesses of the soul, and prayed over in the most solemn seasons of devotion. It is momentous to both parties,

but most so to the woman. "Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband. She must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her folly or her infelicity hath produced: and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise, she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And even of the man we may say, though he can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again, and when he sits among his neighbours he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply."*

It is not necessary for me here to lay down many rules for your guidance in this affair. When however it comes in your way, consult, not only your heart, and your imagination, and your young companions, but your judgment, your God by prayer, and your parents for advice. Enter into no acquaintance without the cognisance of those natural guides and guardians of your youth. It is at the beginning of connections of this kind that parental counsel should be sought. Never commit yourselves by a word till the domestic oracle has been consulted: nor allow your affections to be entangled till a father's and a mother's judgment have been pronounced. Determine that similarity of taste, especially in the most important of all matters, religion, shall form the basis of any union you may form.

Should it be that God has not destined you to wedded bliss, forget not "that there are advantages peculiar to single life, that it affords an immunity from many cares,

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor's "Marriage Ring."

an opportunity for intellectual pursuits, a power to do good extensively, which married women may not enjoy. And if these privileges are improved; if cheerfulness and benevolence characterise the temper, there will be no want of occupation, of happiness, or of sympathy. The kind sister or aunt will be always welcomed; she will be hailed as the agreeable companion, or the tender nurse; as the participator in joy, or the sympathiser in sorrow; as the helper in business, or the companion in affliction; she will be the ready assistant in every good work, the children will run to greet her arrival, the poor will rise up and call her blessed. And if in truth, as we do see in some bright examples in our own day, her energy grows with her desire of doing good, and in the assiduous and pains-taking efforts of Christian charity she seems to forget the weakness of her sex, she realises in one of its most pleasing forms primitive devotedness. In pious exercises more spiritual, in self-denial more mortified, in faith more pure, than any of the cloistered nuns of the strictest habit; while at the same time her religion is without superstition, and her sobriety without gloom. She is one of a holy sisterhood, whose order is truly catholic: whose vows are scriptural: and whose voluntary service is the labour of love."*

We now turn to another chapter in the history of Rebekah, in which she appears to far less advantage than she does in the one we have just reviewed, where the artless simplicity of the virgin is lost in the crooked policy of the designing wife and the too partial mother. Perhaps it will be thought by some that as I am addressing young women, I might have cut short the story with her marriage and her virtues, and drawn a veil over

* Mrs. Sandford.

her future failings. But I bear in recollection what I said in a former chapter that the matron should be held up to the maiden, that from the outset she may learn what to copy and what to avoid. And here is a striking example to serve this purpose, an affecting instance to prove what a transformation a change of circumstances may produce in the same character. Isaac and Rebekah, like Abraham and Sarah, had their faith tried in waiting long for the son who was to be the heir of promise. Twenty years elapsed and Rebekah bore no child. In answer to the earnest prayers of her husband, God gave her the prospect of becoming a mother. Before this happy event took place she received a communication from the Lord that she should give birth to twins, who should be the heads of two separate nations, and that contrary to the order of nature and the custom of nations, the elder brother should serve the younger. Esau and Jacob were born, grew up, and exhibited great difference of taste and character. Into this family of Isaac and Rebekah there entered that which has rent myriads and myriads of households, setting the husband against the wife, the mother against the father, and one child against another; disturbing the harmony of domestic peace; poisoning the springs of domestic happiness; and preventing the progress of domestic improvement, I mean parental partiality. In the case of Isaac and Rebekah, the parents had each their favourite child, and what was worse, manifested their fondness. It may in some cases be almost impossible not to have a preference for one child above another, but what anxious carefulness should there be to conceal it! Policy and justice both demand from parents an equal distribution of their affection, their countenance, and their goods;

for if there be one folly which more certainly punishes itself than another, it is this ill-judged and wicked distinction between equals. Parental partiality injures both the one preferred and the one that is slighted: inflating the one with pride, insolence, and vanity, and corrupting the other by jealousy, envy, and revenge. Isaac loved Esau, and for a reason not very honourable to his character, "because he did eat of his venison." Rebekah loved Jacob, for what reason we are not told; it is probable on account both of his superior excellence, and of the revelation which God had made to her concerning his future history. She was undoubtedly a woman of sincere faith, and even her most censurable conduct arose from misdirected piety. She, like another female in after times, pondered in her heart all the things which had been spoken of God concerning her child of promise. It was not long before the effects of parental partiality appeared in the family. A competition for precedence, and the right of primogeniture, engaged the attention of the brothers, and whetted their spirits against each other from their earliest years, and the issue was alienation, separation, hostility, on the part of the children, and sorrow and distress on the part of the parents. Jacob's conduct was ungenerous, and Esau's profane. The younger son knew that he was destined to precedence, and instead of leaving God to fulfil his own purpose, sought to accomplish it in a manner unworthy both of himself and of the blessing.

Time, which moves on with ceaseless tread, had brought Isaac to old age; and he now thought of his approaching end, and the propriety of settling his domestic affairs. His great concern was to direct the

descent of the patriarchal blessing, which in this case, implied more than that ordinary benediction which every good man would pronounce on all his children without distinction; it comprehended the great things contained in the covenant with Abraham, according to which his posterity was to be selected and distinguished as the peculiar people of God, and to give birth to the Messiah. Isaac ought to have remembered the communication made to Rebekah, and by her doubtless told to him, that this blessing was to be bestowed upon Jacob. Natural attachment for a while overcame his faith, and he prepared to divert the blessing from the channel marked out for it by the purpose and providence of God. To enkindle his affection for Esau, by the remembrance of past gratifications, he wished to have some savoury meat, certainly a carnal introduction to so divine an act, partaking more of the flesh than of the Spirit, and betraying more of that parental partiality under which he had acted, than of the faith of a son of Abraham. See, of what importance it is to avoid contracting bad habits early, seeing time, indulgence and habit, interweave them with our very constitution, till they become a second nature, and age confirms instead of eradicating them. We find the two great infirmities of Isaac's character predominant to the last, a disposition to gratify his palate with a particular kind of food, and partiality to his son Esau. Rebekah, whose affection was ever wakeful, active, and jealous for her favourite, overheard the charge given by her husband to Esau, and instantly set about a scheme to divert the blessing into another, and as she knew into its right, channel. What should she have done? Expostulated with Isaac on the impropriety of acting in direct opposition to the revealed

purpose of God. Such an appeal to a mind devout and contemplative, as his evidently was, notwithstanding its weaknesses, would in all probability have succeeded. Instead of this, she manifested what has ever been considered to be one of woman's infirmities, a disposition to have recourse to finesse, stratagem, and manœuvre, a wish to carry her object by a tortuous and circuitous way, rather than by an open and straightforward course. It is unnecessary for me to enter into the details of her plan, its prompt execution, and its success. It is a sad story. There was nothing but shameless trickery and imposition, a disguised person, a stolen name, sham venison, a false answer. Everything was bad except the motive, and that could not alter the character of the action, and transmute evil into good. It was a disgrace to Rebekah, a cruel fraud practised upon Isaac, and a most grievous injury inflicted on the moral character of her son. We must not load Jacob with more of the infamy of this transaction than what really belongs to him. He was not first in the transgression. His feelings revolted from it when it was proposed to him. He remonstrated against it. His remonstrance, however, was founded more upon the consequences of the evil than the evil itself. And there is a striking difference between his reasoning and that of his son Joseph. Jacob said, "I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing;" Joseph's pious and noble reply was, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." The resoluteness of Rebekah is astounding and affecting, confirming the general opinion that woman, in a bad purpose, is often more bold and determined than man. "Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice." Appalling spectacle, to see

a mother, a religious mother, so far forgetting what is due to her sex, her relationship, and her piety, as not only to lead, but to goad and drag on her son to perpetrate falsehood, and to practise deception upon his half-blind father! O mothers, read this account and tremble! The plan moves forward, but the whole plot was in danger of exploding. The conference between Isaac and his son Jacob is deeply affecting. The half-awakened suspicion and artless simplicity of the father, invests, by the power of contrast, with deeper shades of infamy and guilt, the shameless, undaunted effrontery of the son. Such is the way of transgressors, one sin prepares for, and leads on, to another, till the sinner is involved by a kind of necessity to add another and another lie to help on the former one. Isaac's ears were truer than his eyes, and his faculties were not so blunted by age as not to be capable of reasoning upon some improbabilities; for there is something about falsehood, which though it may silence, yet will not ordinarily satisfy. Craft however in this case was too deep for honesty, and Isaac, kind and incredulous to evil thoughts, soon had his suspicions lulled, ate the venison, and bestowed the blessing. It is no part of my design to paint, or rather copy the scene which followed, when the return of Esau revealed the plot and proclaimed the deception. The shock to poor old Isaac was almost overwhelming. As an aged and an afflicted man, the imposition which had been practised upon him would excite his indignation. Yet a moment's reflection would convince him of his mistake in intending to convey to Esau that blessing which God designed for Jacob. Such considerations rushing upon his mind at once, sufficiently account for all his feelings: it was to him like a place

where two seas meet, or as the union of subterranean fires and waters which causes the earth to tremble. Esau is to be pitied, and would be more so if his distress arose from any other feelings than disappointed ambition. He who profanely despised his birthright, cared for the loss of the blessing, only as it deprived him of some earthly distinctions and temporal possessions.

Rebekah's policy had succeeded. But she soon began to reap its bitter fruits, in perceiving the feud which she had occasioned between the two brothers. The same tent could no longer contain them. And intelligence having reached her that Esau meditated revenge, even to the murder of his fraudulent brother, she hurried away Jacob to the land of Padan-Aram, to seek a protection and a home among her own relatives. With the sequel of this interesting story you are acquainted, and we return to Rebekah. The best explanation that can be given of her conduct, and it has been advanced by her apologists as her defence, is that she acted from religious motives. Perhaps it is in part true; but I think not wholly so. There is much of the mother mixed up with the believer; and no small share of regard for the interests of a favourite child, blended with regard for the purposes of God. But be it so, that religion had the principal hand in this odious deception, then we see how early pious frauds were practised for the futherance of the faith; and Rebekah, so far as this part of her conduct is concerned, is presented to us as anticipating the principles of the Jesuits; for even if we concede to her a religious end, we must admit she adopted the most sinful means to obtain it. She was unquestionably right in her belief that God designed the blessing for Jacob, and in this one respect, I mean her faith, she was stronger and

more unswerving than her husband. Yet this faith was mixed with some unbelief after all; for what else was it but a partial distrust, that led her to adopt such sinful means to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose? Does God's truth require man's falsehood to fulfil it? Cannot we leave God to find means to perform his own word without supposing he requires our sins to help him out of a dilemma? The urgency of the temptation was no doubt very great. In her view an hour or two would decide the matter, and the blessing intended for Jacob would be transferred to Esau, and how then would the declaration be fulfilled? She should have left it to God.

Let us now leave the history, and learn the lessons with which it is fraught. The Scripture narratives are intended to exhibit holiness and sin embodied in living characters; the one for our imitation, and the other for our warning. And not unfrequently we find both sin and holiness blended in the same character, requiring a careful analysis and an accurate discrimination. This discrimination is requisite in looking at the character now before us.

As you see Rebekah with her pitcher on the shoulder coming to draw water, you cannot fail to notice her domestic and industrious habits. Yes, it was when thus occupied, and not when indolently reclining upon the couch of ease, nor when sauntering with a company of associates as idle and gossiping as herself, nor when wasting her time in useless occupations of frivolity and amusement, that Eliezer saw her. No; but, though high-born, wealthy, and beautiful, bearing the pitcher upon her shoulder to the well to draw the evening's supply of water for the family. I admit that the arti-

ficial habits of society had not then introduced those distinctions in household occupations which the advance of civilization has now brought into our habitations. At that time, and long after, the women of wealthy families were engaged in services, which are now with propriety consigned to servants. There was nothing unseemly then in the daughters of men of rank being found with their pitchers upon their shoulders at the public well. Anything like this would with us be altogether out of character. I have, however, not only heard of, but have known at least one, who though high-born, yet under the influence of mistaken views of the obligations of religion, performed those menial services which belong to, and are usually discharged by domestics. Surely such "voluntary humility," as the apostle calls it, this unprescribed, factitious lowliness, does neither honour to its subject nor good to Christianity; for when mistresses thus do the works of servants, servants by a natural ambition and exchange will seek to take the place of mistresses. I ask no woman to step out of her place, or to descend from her rank, but only to be industrious in the domestic duties which belong to it. Every young woman should aim to be useful at home, and she is not a wise or good mother who does not train her daughters for such occupations. But as I have already dwelt on this, it is not necessary to enlarge upon it here, any further than to say that the humble yet useful employments of domestic life, are a virtuous woman's most honourable station; that whether in single life, wedlock, or widowhood, God and nature have destined you, my female friends, to occupation, not perhaps highly honourable in the eyes of unfeeling wealth or giddy dissipation, but highly important to the

happiness of others, and therefore essential to your own.

We cannot fail to notice in Rebekah's early deportment an artless unaffected simplicity, affectingly in contrast with her subsequent artifice and duplicity. This it is which invests her character, and most of the excellent ones in Scripture, with such an irresistible charm. To whatever we look we find that simplicity is beauty. This is true of nature as the great model. Amidst all its grandeur and complexity, its processes appear easy and spontaneous, being all originated and directed by a wisdom and a power which operate not only without visible effort but in perfect repose. Simplicity is no less beautiful in art than in nature, and the very perfection of art is to hide itself in copying the simplicity of nature. All this holds good of manners, there especially affectation is hateful and repulsive. Studied display of any kind, whether of intellect or virtue, of conversation or even of pronunciation, or of singularity, whether in dress or habits, is always odious. It cannot secure respect but must excite ridicule. Perhaps this is one of the principal follies against which women, and especially young women of education, have to guard. An artificial character has a deeper meaning, involving immorality, as signifying a tendency to artifice, equivocation, and the simulation of virtue not really possessed. This in its fixed and consolidated form is hypocrisy, the most odious vice on earth. But I now refer to artificial manners; the affectation or parade of superiority in any particular; a studied mannerism for the purpose of display. This generally springs from that vanity which has been considered by many female writers as one of the foibles

of their sex, and the prevalence of which really spoils many otherwise useful and amiable characters. It is in woman what ambition is in man; and though it may be a less dangerous, it is a meaner fault; and it is a form of self-love equally jealous and insatiate. Nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, and the only security against it is genuine humility. Be clothed, young women, with this; it is your most becoming and beautiful garment; and where will you obtain it, but from the wardrobe of Christianity?

Observe the courteous affability of this interesting young woman. Here was a stranger, a servant, though evidently a servant of no mean master; and yet how respectful, how gentle, how affable was her address. Josephus, fond of adding in his paraphrastic manner to the terseness and simplicity of the Scripture narrative, relates that there were other young females with Rebekah, who were asked for water, but refused; and that she reproved them for their churlishness. Courtesy is a becoming grace in both sexes, but most so in the female; while rudeness, which is a blemish upon other characters, is a blot upon hers. A female churl is a monstrosity, from which we turn away with insufferable disgust. Courtesy is one of the cheapest exercises of virtue; it costs even less than rudeness: for the latter, except in hearts that are petrified into stone, must put the subject of it to some expense of feeling. Even a rough voice issuing from female lips is disagreeable, much more rough manners exhibited by a female form. There are various things which prevent the exercise of courtesy. In some cases, it is to be traced to pride, a vice which befits a demon, but not a woman. In others it is the result of absolute ill-nature, a morose,

sour, and ill-conditioned mind, which knows no genial seasons, and experiences no soft emotions. Some are petulant and irascible, and when putting on a mood of civility, are easily driven from it by the slightest touch of their irritability. Be courteous then; it is, if not of the solid substance of holiness, at least its polish. It is a Christian grace; for an apostle has said, "Be pitiful, be courteous."

Akin to this was Rebekah's kindness. There was not only an external affability of manner, but a real benevolence of disposition. Here was a stranger, tired and faint with a day's journey in a hot country, asking her kind offices to procure a supply of water for himself and his weary beasts. To grant his request for himself, would have cost her no great labour; but it must have been a considerable effort to draw water enough for a number of thirsty camels! And this is more apparent when you know the construction of eastern wells, which are not like ours, but are a kind of sunken cistern, to which you descend by a flight of steps. How many tiresome descents must this young creature have made, before she satisfied the thirst of Eliezer's camels. And there is another little circumstance which marks her kindness; Eliezer asked only for a "sip" of water, for so the original word signifies, and she said, "Drink, and thy camels." It was a solitary act, I admit; but it was so promptly, so generously done as to indicate a habit. It is said, with as much beauty as simplicity, "Love is kind;" and, if possible, with still greater beauty, it is given as one of the traits of the virtuous woman, "In her tongue is the law of kindness," the tongue here, as in all cases, commanding the hand. Insensibility in a man is bad enough, but worse in a

woman. An unfeeling woman is a contradiction in terms, for the female heart has ever been found the dwelling-place of kindness, where misery, when all other hopes have failed, is sure to find an asylum. In what age, or in what country in the world, has woman forfeited her character as the ministering angel of humanity? When and where has the female bosom disowned the claims of misery and repudiated the virtue of benevolence? Arctic snows have not frozen up the springs of mercy in the female heart, nor tropical suns dried them up. Tyranny has not crushed it out, nor barbarism extinguished it. Look at Mungo Park, when alone in the midst of Africa, and lying down to die in want and despair, found by the black women of that wild land, carried to their tent, fed, clad, and cherished amidst the tender strains of the impromptu song, with which they cheered the feelings of his heart and expressed the benevolence of their own. Young women, cherish in your bosoms the purest philanthropy. Abhor selfishness, you are made for kindness. Oppose not the design of your Creator. Do no violence to your own nature. A stony heart becomes not you. A tearless woman is a revolting scene in our sorrowful world. She may be pure and beautiful as the marble statue, but if withal she is as hard and cold, who can admire her?

I cannot yet pass from the contemplation of this sweet and amiable young creature to behold her in her future character, till I have referred again to the veil of modesty under which all this affability and kindness was concealed. In listening to her language, in witnessing her conduct, will the most fastidious, prudish, or censorious of her sex, find aught to condemn in any

thing she said or did? Did she in the smallest measure violate decorum? She did not stand to gaze upon the stranger and his camels, or do anything to attract his attention, but was intent upon the object for which she came, and was diverted from it only by an opportunity to do good, thrown in her way, without her seeking for it. She did not anxiously or confidently enter into discourse with the man, but waited till she was addressed, and then answered him modestly. Modesty is the most attractive of all female graces. What is intelligence without it, but bolder impudence; or beauty but a more seductive snare? There is, I know, a reserve that degenerates into repulsive pride, as on the other hand, there is a frankness that corrupts into forwardness. Woman is intended neither to avoid man by a bashful timidity, nor to court him by an obtrusive advance. A genuine modesty guards against each extreme. It is that semi-transparent veil, which by revealing half her excellence, makes more lovely that which it reveals, and excites desire to know the rest. It is her shield as well as her veil, repelling all the darts with which, either by acts, by words, or by looks, any one would dare to assail her purity. It is also her ornament, investing all her other excellences with additional charms, the blush of purity upon the cheek of beauty. It is her power, by which she subdues every heart that is worth the conquest. Yea, what is not modesty to woman? Lay not aside your veil. Cast not away your shield. Divest not yourselves of your brightest ornament. Enfeeble not your power to influence others. Avoid everything in which the absence of this virtue can show itself. See how the want of it is reproved by the prophet Isaiah in his third chapter and how the practice of it

enjoined by the apostle Paul: "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." Neither in dress, nor in conversation, nor in action, nor in the toleration in your presence of improper discourse, violate this law. Chastity is the robe which every woman should wear, and modesty is the golden clasp that keeps it upon her, and the fringe that adorns it: when the clasp is lost, the garment is likely to fall off; and when the fringe is torn away, or carelessly allowed to be trampled upon, the disfigurement of the robe has commenced, till at length it is cast away as not worth being retained. I do not wish you to mistake a silly and affected bashfulness for modesty. You live not amidst Asiatic ignorance, tyranny, sensuality, and female degradation, where woman is used mainly to pander to the appetite of her lord, and where by a cruel jealousy she is excluded from intercourse with all but her fellow-slaves and their common tyrant. You are the women of an enlightened age and country, and you are admitted on equal terms to all the enjoyments of social intercourse. Assert in this respect your rights; maintain your standing, and while you throw off all boldness, cast away with it all unworthy prudishness. In one of my previous chapters, I remarked that the over-prudish mind, which can never speak to one of the opposite sex but with a blush, is not always the purest one in reality.

There are, my young friends, one or two momentous lessons for you to learn from Rebekah's conduct in after life: lessons which you must carry with you through all your future existence on earth. The first is general: a

change of circumstances often produces a considerable change of character and conduct. How unlike the maid of Nahor was the wife in Canaan! And is it an uncommon thing now, for a change, far more extensive and more powerful than this, to be effected by the new condition into which marriage brings the female character? Learn also this special lesson, that we should never seek a good end by bad means; or in other words, never do evil that good may come. Abhor the great principle and favourite maxim of Jesuitism, that the end sanctifies the means; and especially abhor the application and operation of this most detestable principle in reference to religion; a principle which is more or less interwoven with the whole history of Popery. What crimes have been perpetrated by the zealots of Rome in the abused name of religion, for the good of their church! The pages of history which record the progress of that dreadful apostacy are not only stained with blood, but steeped in it. And even by other professing Christians, holding a purer creed, and animated by a milder spirit, how much has been done, ostensibly for religion, but really for sectarianism, in contradiction of every principle of the law of God, and love to our neighbour! Religion refuses to be served by any principles of action but its own, and disdains to accept any offering which is contrary to truth, love, holiness, and honour. And as the stronger our zeal is for an object, the more we are in danger of resorting, in times of difficulty or in prospect of defeat, to unworthy means; so the more fervent we are to promote any religious cause, the more watchful should we be against being seduced into the use of unholy means to obtain success.

The wife of Isaac was right in her object, but wrong in her means, to obtain the blessing for Jacob.

But we must take leave of Rebekah. It is somewhat remarkable that the sacred narrative takes no notice of her death. One might have hoped that she who came upon our notice at first like a bright and lovely vision, would have been seen to depart with as much gracefulness, simplicity, and beauty as she exhibited when we first saw her with such delighted attention. Is it that this act of her history so disrobed her character of its pristine beauty that censure is pronounced upon her by this most impressive silence? But is hers the only instance of painful contrast between the maid and the matron? The only instance that has disappointed the hopes raised by youthful excellences? The only instance in which the full-blown flower has not answered to the bud? Happy would it have been for thousands if it were. Let it then be your first solicitude to exhibit, in your early life and single state, all those general and moral beauties which form the character of virgin excellence. Be holy, industrious, modest, benevolent, and useful: inspire hope in every beholder, and awaken expectation. But then, be ever anxious, studious, and prayerful, that in the transition from the single to the wedded state; in the developement of the girl into the woman, all that was lovely, artless, and simple in youthful charms, shall, with unbroken and unvarying consistency, ripen into all that is holy, estimable, venerable in the wife, the mother, and the matron.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORNAMENTS OF A PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. TITUS ii, 10.

Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 PETER iii, 3, 4.

THERE is in human nature an instinctive propensity to decoration. To whatever principle the taste may be traced, whether to innate perception of the beautiful, or to a desire to excite admiration, the fact is indubitable. It is seen equally in savage and civilised nations; and is manifested by them alike in attention to their persons and their dwellings, and indeed in all their social customs and usages. The string of shells, fishes' teeth, or bits of bone, round the neck of the Polynesian, and the blaze of diamonds, or rubies, upon the brow or breast of the British Queen, indicate the same instinctive propensity. This taste, however in many cases it may be altogether corrupted in its object, wrong in its principle, or excessive in its degree, is in its own nature an imitation of the workmanship of God, who, "by his Spirit

has garnished the heavens," and covered the earth with beauty. Who can look over one of creation's lovely scenes, and behold the display of elegance of form, and beauty of colour in the flowers of the field and garden, in the plumage of the birds, in the meandering rivers, and the gentle undulations of the ground, exhibiting wood and copse, hill and dale, all gilded with the beams of the glorious sun, I say, who can witness all this without being convinced that God himself delights in decoration! He has made a world which he has ornamented so profusely that he has scattered beauties where there are no eyes but his own to behold them :

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathomed waves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

To reject all idea and effort to add the fair to the good, the beautiful to the useful, would be to oppose and not to imitate, to condemn and not to approve, the works of the Great Creator. And indeed no sect has ever arisen among Christians which has even pretended to disclaim all attention to what is ornamental. Even those who conscientiously repudiate the pearl, diamond, and ruby, the feather, and the flower, erect their buildings, select their furniture, plant their gardens, and choose their garments, according to their ideas of taste, and with some regard to the laws of beauty. Hence, I think that both the apostles who touch on the subject of personal decoration for Christian women, are to be understood not as condemning all ornament, but only regulating it. The propensity to personal decoration is, without all doubt, peculiarly strong in the female heart. That a maid "should forget her ornaments, or a bride

her attire," is spoken of by the prophet as unlikely to a proverb. There is nothing wrong in the instinct itself. It serves important purposes. Its total absence is felt as a serious interruption to the pleasure of social intercourse. A sloven is disagreeable; a slattern intolerable. Christianity makes not war on any of man's natural propensities, but only on their abuse. Its object is not to eradicate our instincts, but to prune and train them, and make them bear good fruit. Now it is well known that some, in what the apostles say on this subject, find an absolute prohibition of all ornaments of dress, and an injunction to wear only the most plain and unadorned apparel. I think Christian women may fall into much more dangerous misinterpretations of Scripture than this; yet I have no doubt it is a misinterpretation. The prohibition seems to be comparative rather than absolute, and contains an injunction to be far more attentive to the ornaments of the soul than to those of the body. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," means, "I prefer mercy to sacrifice." At the same time, there can be no doubt that in the words of the text it is taken for granted that women at all times are, and that the women of those times were, far too much addicted to ornamental dress; that they trenched both upon modesty and economy by their habits; and therefore that in these verses the apostle laid down some very important hints as to the principles on which Christian women should regulate their attire. They inculcate modesty in opposition to what is immodest: economy in opposition to extravagance. "Excessive costliness," says Archbishop Leighton, on this passage, "argues and feeds the pride of the heart, and defrauds, if not others of their dues, yet the poor of their charity, which in God's sight

is a due debt too: and far more comfort shalt thou have on thy death-bed, to remember that at such a time, instead of putting lace on my own back, I helped a naked back to clothing; I abated somewhat of my former superfluities to supply the poor with necessities; far sweeter will this be than to remember that I could needlessly cast out many pounds to serve my pride, while I grudged a penny to relieve the poor." Barnes has given, I think, the true meaning of the apostle. "It is not to be supposed that all use of gold or pearls as articles of dress is here forbidden; but the idea is that the Christian female is not to seek these as the adorning which she desires, or is not to imitate the world in these personal decorations. It may be a difficult question to settle how much ornament is allowable, and when the true line is passed. But though this cannot be settled by any exact rule, since much must depend on age, and on the relative rank in life, and the means which one may possess; yet there is one general rule which is applicable to all, and which might regulate all. It is, that the true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind, and which engrosses the time and attention more than the virtues of the heart, we may be certain is wrong. The apparel should be such as not to attract attention; such as becomes our situation; such as will not be particularly singular; such as will not leave the impression that the heart is fixed on it. It is a poor ambition to decorate a dying body with gold and pearls. It should not be forgotten that it will soon need other habiliments, and will occupy a position where gold and pearls would be a mockery. When the heart is right,

when there is a true and supreme love for religion, it is usually not difficult to regulate the subject of dress."

It is somewhat remarkable that Plato, the loftiest of all the Grecian sages, has a passage which strikingly resembles that of the apostle. "Behaviour and not gold is the ornament of a woman. To courtesans, these things, jewels and ornaments, are advantageous to their catching more admirers; but for a woman who wishes to enjoy the favour of one man, good behaviour is the proper ornament, and not dresses. And you should have the blush upon your countenance, which is the sign of modesty, instead of paint: and worth and sobriety instead of gold and emeralds." It is impossible not to notice this similarity between the apostle and the philosopher; and equally impossible, one should think, not to mark the superiority over the reason of the one of the inspiration of the other. "The philosopher is of the earth, earthly: the apostle brings the authority of God, and the power of the unseen world distinctly into view. While Plato leads wives to seek exclusively the honour that comes from men, Peter teaches them to seek the honour which come down from God, the true Judge of excellence, the great Fountain of honour."

Before we pass from this subject of personal decoration, we will just notice the very beautiful reference which the apostle makes to that part of our nature, which it is to be your chief concern to beautify. "Let it be," he says, "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." How exquisitely is this put. How impressive the ideas which are conveyed. It is the decoration of the soul rather than of the body, about which Christian

women should be chiefly solicitous: and about the ornaments that are suitable to its own nature. The soul is indestructible and immortal; so should its ornaments be. What can jewels of silver or jewels of gold do for this? Can the diamond sparkle upon the intellect? or the ruby blaze upon the heart? Or the pearl be set in the conscience? Or the gorgeous robe clothe the character? Or the feather or the flower wave over the renewed and holy nature? No! The appropriate ornaments of the soul are truth, holiness, knowledge, faith, hope, love, joy, humility; and all the other gifts and graces of the spirit, wisdom, prudence, fortitude and gentleness; these are the jewels with which the inner man should be adorned. The outer man is corruptible. Dust it is, and unto dust it shall return. That beautiful woman glittering in all the profusion of diamonds, the admiration and envy of the court or the ball room, must ere long be a mass of putrefaction too ghastly to be looked upon, and then a hideous skeleton, a collection of bones, a heap of dust: and where will be the immortal spirit? will it wear the cast-off jewels of the body? O no, these remain, rescued from the grasp of the king of terrors, but only to ornament other bodies, and not to prepare souls for immortal glory. But turn now to that other female, the woman who, regardless of the decoration of the body, was all intent upon the beauty of the soul; look at her, I say, who was clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, and decorated with the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. She too dies, and whatever of her beauty there was in her person, dies for a season with her; but the indestructible and immortal spirit over which death has no dominion, goes

not unadorned into the presence of the Eternal; for the jewels with which it decorated itself on earth are as indestructible as its own nature, and go with it to shine in the presence of God.

"Men," says the good archbishop already quoted, "think it poor and mean to be meek. Nothing is more exposed to contempt than the spirit of meekness; it is mere folly with men; but that is no matter: this overweighs all disesteem, it is with God of great price. And these are indeed as He values them, and no otherwise. Though it be not the country's fashion, yet it is the fashion at court; yea, it is the King's own fashion; 'Learn of me,' says he, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart.' Some that are court bred, will send for the prevailing fashions there, though they live not at court; and though the peasants think them strange dresses, yet they regard not that, but use them as finest and best. So care you not what the world says: you are not to stay long with them. Desire to have both your stuffs and your fashion from heaven. The robe of humility, the garment of meekness, will be sent you. Wear them for his sake who sends them to you. He will be pleased to see you in them, and is not this enough? It is never right in anything with us till we attain to this, to tread on the opinion of men, and eye nothing but God's approbation."*

But we now pass from the ornaments of the Christian woman's person to those of her profession, and these indeed are the chief subject of this chapter. There is something impressive in the exhortation, "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." Even the great truth

* See also Dr. John Brown's masterly Exposition of this passage of Peter.

of our Divine Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is thus represented as susceptible of decoration on the part of those who profess it. The sentiment conveyed is that the holy life of a consistent Christian is an adornment of the profession of this sublime doctrine. This, more than all splendour of tasteful architecture, or gorgeous forms, or imposing ceremonies, or anything else which can appeal to the senses, is the decoration of Christian doctrine. It is this, as it shines forth in the beauties of holiness, that truly decorates religion.

> "Beyond the pomp that charms the eyes,
> Or rites adorned with gold."

A very large proportion of the members of all Christian churches are females, and young females too. This, on many accounts, is a very delightful fact. It has, however, been sometimes complained that like others, they are not so anxious to sustain their profession well, as to make it. And it is for their sake, and to lead them to consider what would set off their profession to the best advantage, that this chapter is designed. What is really ornamental attracts attention and excites admiration, and these are advantages which the friends of religion should secure by their conduct. I shall distribute what I have to advance on this subject into the four following particulars.

I. I will consider the personal qualities which will have the effect here desired. As incongruity of conduct in reference to any profession whatever is a blemish and not a beauty, a deformity and not a decoration, remember that inconsistency would be so in you in reference to religion. Study your profession, and thoroughly understand what it implies and enjoins.

Consider well what sanctity of conduct; what spirituality of mind; what separation from the world in spirit and taste; what devotional feelings; what faith, hope, love, and humility; what amiableness of disposition and amenity of temper, are included in the declaration (and that declaration you have actually made), "I am a Christian." You should not have made such a profession if you did not understand it, or mean to sustain it. I must remind you, it is a solemn thing to profess to be a disciple of Christ. It supposes you to be a new creature, that old things are passed away, and that all things have become new, with you; that you have new principles, new motives, new ends of life, new tastes and new pleasures. Now, your profession is to be maintained with a due regard to this. Your conduct must comport with it. You must be dissimilar in these things, quite so, to those who make no such profession. They must see the difference as well as hear of it. You must commend yourselves to them as consistent with yourselves. You must compel them to say, "Well, we do not like her religion, but it is quite in harmony with her profession." But what is this consistency? The following remarks will perhaps explain it.

There must be earnestness, without enthusiasm, fanaticism, or bigotry. Lukewarmness as to any duty is odious. Earnestness on the other hand excites attention, and sometimes admiration, even where its object is far from commendable; how much more where that object is holy, benevolent, and useful. It is a noble and a lofty spectacle to see amidst a race of frivolous mortals a soul, which being immortal, is intent upon its immortality, and though surrounded by the frivolities of this visible world, is intent upon the realities of the

unseen state. Nothing can be more dull and repulsive than a lukewarm and heartless profession of religion; a pale, sickly, and shrivelled form, which has all the decay of consumption, without its hectic flush or lustrous eye. On the other hand, how impressive a spectacle is it to behold a young woman amidst the wonderment of some of her companions, and the laughter of others, rising upon the wings of faith and habitual devotion above the region of their levities into that of devotion; to see her eye, as it is upturned to heaven, sparkling with the beam of eternity that has fallen upon it; and to follow her in her ardent career, pursuing her seraphic course, undeterred by contrary examples or opposing influence. But there must be no enthusiasm leading her to violate the law of sobriety; no fanaticism leading her to tie down others to all the rules she has imposed upon herself, and to cherish a hostile, much less a malignant feeling towards them, because they seem to differ from her in some things which she deems important. There must be the most profound humility blended with all this intense earnestness, and the mildest forbearance towards others, combined with the utmost conscientiousness as regards the laws which she imposes on herself. Earnestness implies a resolute determination never to allow others to interfere with our convictions; a courage that dares to be singular; a fortitude which braves opposition, though it should be united with gentleness even under persecution. Earnestness must be shown by an intelligent and well-regulated zeal to bring others under that influence which is the spring of its own energies. Mild in persuasion, gentle in entreaty, and with a loving insinuating manner, the female religious professor must aim at the conversion

of others. Usefulness, in the way of holy activity for the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind, must be a conspicuous trait of her character. Selfishness, indolence, and inertness, are disfigurements of character, while benevolent activity is one of its richest ornaments.

There must be seriousness without gloom. On the one hand, she who is bent upon eternity and anxious for salvation, cannot sink down into the levity of those who are all taken up with fashion, amusement, and folly. On the other, true religion includes such an intelligent joy as makes its possessor satisfied with her own sources of enjoyment, without running to the amusements of the world for pleasure and excitement. The young female professor must let it be seen and felt that her religion is her bliss and not her penance; that it is her song and her solace. She must appear as irradiated with sun-beams, and not invested with shades. Her countenance must be the index of a heart at peace, of a bosom serene and happy.

And in addition to all this, there must be a most anxious desire to cultivate that prime virtue in the composition of womanly and Christian excellence, meekness. See how this is commended in the passage which I have already quoted from the writings of the apostle Peter: "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." God values it above all gifts of intellect, delights in it above the most splendid genius, honours it above all that men delight to honour. It is woman's ornament above all others; it is her defence, for who can oppress the gentleness that never provokes, and can scarcely resist or complain? Who can wantonly tread on that

lowly, lovely floweret, which as it lifts its unpretending head, silently says, "Can you crush one that hurts nothing?" Nothing is more unsightly than the reverse of this; an irritable, discontented, peevish, domineering woman. Hence the declaration of the inspired Israelitish sage, "It is better to dwell in the corner of the house-top alone, than in a wide house with a brawling woman. It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind." Mr. Jay has drawn a beautiful picture of this virtue in his character of a Christian wife; as one "Who can feel neglects and unkindnesses, and yet retain her composure; who can calmly remonstrate, and meekly reprove; who can yield and accommodate; who is not 'easily provoked,' and is 'easily entreated;' who would endure rather than complain, and would rather suffer in secret, than disturb others with her grief." Such is meekness, the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life, and such the ornament of female Christian profession.

II. I now touch upon another branch of the subject, and that is the importance of social excellence to the adornment of religion.

Great injustice has been done to religion, and a great hindrance thrown in the way of its diffusion, by those descriptions of it, which represent it as an abstract thing, almost exclusively appertaining to the sabbath as to time, and to the church as to place; a mere matter of devotion, a transaction between God and the soul about salvation and heaven; but having nothing or little to do with secular affairs, the social relations, and the places of resort in human life; in short, as a thing which looks entirely heavenward, but which casts no

glance upon earth. This is superstition, and we find enough of it in Popery, which overlays with a cumbrous ceremonial the moral duties of the law, as well as the free grace of the gospel; cuts in many instances the ties of social life, and isolates men and women from their fellows; and by the devotions of the cloister, the convent, and the church, supersedes the duties of the house, the shop, and the exchange; thus setting forth religion, as fitting men for the next world, but having very little to do with their abode in the present one. On the contrary, true religion, the religion of the Bible, is seen under two aspects; one looking up to heaven; the other looking down to earth. It gathers all the interests of man under its protection and fostering care. Like the sun, which, though fixed in the heavens, pours the flood of his light and glory and cherishing influence upon earth; or like the atmosphere which, though above the earth, enters into every place upon it, and sustains the insects that creep, as well as the birds that soar; so religion irradiates with its light, guides by its revelations, animates with its stimulus, sanctifies by its power, and blesses with its influence, in all their relations, and all their interests, all those who yield themselves up to its authority and government. It goes to palaces and teaches kings; to the legislature and teaches senators; to the exchange and teaches merchants; to the cottages and teaches peasants and workmen: instructing all in the various duties which they owe to God and to their fellow men. Religion is also a household thing, a family law: it lifts the latch of the house and goes in and takes its seat at the parental board, and joins the circle round the hearth, as well as round the altar; it swells the joys of the domestic fellowship, as well as responds

to the morning prayer, or chants the evening hymn; it founds the duties of the second table of the law upon those of the first, employs the loftiest theology to enforce the commonest morality, and enjoins the most ordinary obligations of social existence by motives drawn from the cross of Christ. Hence the necessity for professors to pay the greatest attention to the various duties of social and domestic life. We are commanded to let our "light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify God." So in the beautiful passage quoted from the apostle Peter, where he gives directions to Christian wives, he says, "Be in subjection to your own husbands, that if they obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives: while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Here again is the fact set out, that religion is intended to regulate the intercourse, and form the character, of domestic and social life, and that where its influence so exerted is seen, it must be beneficial to the observers of it. I wish to press this most earnestly upon your attention, that the faith of the gospel is intended and calculated to carry social excellence to the very highest perfection. It is the soil in which all the seeds of domestic happiness will best flourish.

It should not be forgotten that social excellence is often seen apart from religion. Most exemplary instances of the home duties of life are not seldom found in those who make no profession of religion. Good husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, are found outside the circle of vital piety; a fact which ought to make those that are within it, still more anxious to be exemplary in the discharge of their obligations. A real

Christian should excel unconverted persons not only in religion, but in morality. She should not only be more holy, but more socially excellent. She should excel the worldling in those things which the latter makes her boast, and rise above the level which she has prescribed as her highest elevation in moral and social virtue. Select, therefore, the most dutiful and affectionate daughter, the most kind and attentive sister you can of this class, and say to yourself, "She makes no profession of religion, and yet she excels, in a manner worthy of attention and admiration, in all the duties of domestic life. Now, as I do profess religion, I must if possible be still more exemplary than she is in all social obligations, for surely nothing could possibly bring religion into greater disrepute than for my parents, or my brothers and sisters, or even the servants, to make a comparison to my disadvantage, between my conduct and hers." You probably have heard of that Roman daughter, who when an aged father was in his condemned cell and left to starve, all having been prohibited from carrying him food, nourished him from the same breast which sustained her infant. The authorities were so struck with the report, that the old man was pardoned, the daughter raised to public esteem, and the prison demolished to make way for a temple dedicated to filial virtue. If paganism furnished such an example of devoted affection, and if pagans could so admire it, what ought Christianity to do? Not of course in the same mode of action, but in every other in which genuine and strong affection can show itself. If you would adorn your profession it must be in this way of domestic excellence. There may be the most seraphic piety, so far as the raptures of devotion go; there may be a most

punctilious performance of all the rites and ceremonies of religion; there may be a most eager and regular attendance upon all the public services of religion; there may be an ardent zeal for the spread of the religious peculiarities of your denomination, but if at the same time there be a deficiency of duty, honour, and obedience to your parents, or of kind interest and affection for your brothers and sisters, or of humane consideration for your servants; all this religious profession will only excite disgust, and raise a suspicion of your sincerity, and a prejudice against religion itself. No one can possibly be attracted to, or conciliated by, a religion which is in any great degree destitute of social and domestic excellence. It is a terrible taunt to be thrown at any one: "Yes, she is, if her own profession and supposition be consulted, a very good Christian; but it is a pity she is not a better daughter, a more kind sister, and a more accommodating neighbour." The most flaming profession must be at once thrown into eclipse by such a sarcasm. If you were to study how most effectually to discredit, not only your profession of it, but religion itself, you could not be more successful than by associating with it such a line of conduct as this. I do therefore most solemnly and anxiously entreat you to enter very deeply into the subject of the chapter entitled, "The Parental Home."

It is probable that this chapter will be read by some who sustain the character of female servants. This is a class of persons to be found in all our churches, and in some is very numerous; and I take this opportunity of saying that I have many such who are among the brightest ornaments of the church under my care, and who by their exemplary deportment do much to recom-

mend religion to their employers. Their honesty, diligence, industry, good temper, and obliging, respectful deportment, make them the comfort of the households in which they live. It is somewhat observable that the text which speaks of our "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour," was addressed to servants. And so far as the ornamental parts of religion are concerned, as well as its substantial elements, none have more occasions, or more favourable circumstances, for exhibiting them than female servants. Their humble situation, by testing their good temper, devotedness, and submission, gives them an opportunity of bringing out into bold and beautiful relief the most lovely traits of Christian piety. On the other hand, there are some, who by a lamentable deficiency of these more amiable qualities, though perhaps they may have real religious principle, have excited much prejudice against genuine piety, and led their employers to say, "I am not anxious again to have what are called religious servants, for in most things they are no better, and in some they are worse than others."

III. There are intellectual ornaments of your profession, which you should seek both on their own account and on that of religion. True it is that genuine and consistent religion is its own recommendation, and depends upon nothing extraneous for its real value. Still, since there are those who have imbibed prejudices against it, and have taken up mistaken views of its nature, as if it were at war with the gifts of the intellect and the graces of the character, it would be well to disabuse their minds, and by your attainments, accomplishments, and elegance, to convince them that piety is not, as they may suppose, another name for ignorance,

stupidity, and vulgarity. For their sakes, then, as well as for your own pleasure, cultivate your minds by study. Acquire an eager thirst for knowledge. Be fond of reading, and of the best kind of reading. Disprove the slander that girls are only fond of tales and novels, of stories of love, female adventures or heroism. Prize knowledge; desire to arrive at truth; be anxious to investigate the wonders of nature; and covet to enrich your minds with the treasures dug up and distributed in such abundance in this wonderful age. Store your minds with this wealth. But let other faculties be brought into exercise besides your memory; cultivate your judgment, be inquisitive, reflective, discriminating. There are many young persons whose memory is a storehouse crowded with facts, names, and dates, but who are lamentably deficient after all in judgment. They may talk French, quote history, and display other accomplishments, but their intellect is too feeble to form, to hold, or to defend, an opinion of their own. We do not of course expect all women to be profound logicians, or subtle metaphysicians, but most tolerably well-educated females may by vigorous and well sustained efforts arrive at some maturity of sound judgment. Let it then be seen that the highest kind of wisdom and knowledge does not lead you to despise the lower kinds; lest those who are adepts only in them, should by what they see in you despise that which is the highest. Make it clear that they who are the children of God are most solicitous to become acquainted with all the works of their Heavenly Father, not excepting the wonders and glories of creation. Convince the worshippers of the God of nature, (or rather of the false god, Nature) that while you are chiefly anxious to pass on

and worship Him who sits enthroned between the cherubim, upon the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, you can bow and adore with them in the vestibule of his temple, and ascend with them to the highest altitude of earthly subjects and general knowledge; and that when like birds of weaker pinions, and dimmer vision, they droop the wing and stop their flight, you, like the eagle soaring still upward to the sun, can still pursue your heaven-bound course, and rise into the regions of celestial splendour.

Nearly allied to this, is taste, or a perception and love of the beautiful and sublime in nature, in literature, in accomplishments, in conduct, yes, and in Holy Scripture. The Bible is full of instances of this. With a correct literary taste you will relish more even this bread of life, that came down from heaven, the Word of God. Inspiration has garnished its page with beauties that are hidden from eyes whose vision has not been strengthened by education. The Scripture is a paradise of flowers to be admired, as well as of fruits to be eaten.

Taste displayed even in what are called accomplishments is ornamental to piety, when not carried to excess. As I observed, in a former chapter, these matters of elegance are not to be despised. True, it is a sin for a Christian woman to spend hours and hours of each precious day in the fashionable modes of killing time, by embroidery, crotchet work, painting, languages, and music, to the neglect of religion, useful reading, and all benevolent effort. It is truly affecting, to see a rational, immortal, and accountable creature, dwelling in this world of ignorance, sin, and misery, which she could do something to enlighten, reform and bless, (and she herself on her way to eternity and the bar of God,) con-

suming the best and preparatory period of her whole existence in this world and the next, in working figures upon canvass, or drawing them upon paper; or in playing and singing; or in acquiring German, French, or Italian. Let me not however be misunderstood. I am not such a rigid utilitarian as to be the advocate of the merely useful in human character, for I really love and admire the ornamental. I am not all for Doric strength, but contend also for Ionic grace and Corinthian elegance. I am not for young women laying down the needle and the pencil; or for their leaving the piano-forte silent and untouched; or foreign languages unlearnt. No such thing! Religion forbids not these matters. Nature, and the Bible too, are full of the sweetest embroidery and enamelling, full of music and painting, and all the varieties of a language not our own. Instead of forbiding what can add embellishment to the female character, I enjoin it. Woman, formed to please, yea, made in Paradise, where beauty was in perfection, and where thy first lessons in taste were taught by the Great Master of all created beauty, go on to besprinkle thy character and to interweave thy conduct with every flower of elegance; and especially Christian woman, let it be seen by thy sex, that thou hast not so learned Christ as to throw off all delight in the tasteful, the decorative, and the picturesque, with which pointing to the lily, the vine, the birds, and the flocks, he was pleased to enliven and adorn his own discourses. To me it is always a beautiful sight to behold the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, in which genuine piety is ever attired, adorned, (not encumbered,) with the jewels of elegant accomplishments and tasteful decoration.

Now all this is important to you as young unmarried

women: and how is the importance of it augmented by your looking forward and contemplating yourselves in future life, as wives and mothers! Without intelligence and taste, are you fitted to be the companion of a wise and sensible man, or to preside with advantage over the education of children? Remember the character of the age in which you live. But even in these days of knowledge and taste we know very well that the aptness and ability of a good house-wife are always invaluable: for it is a poor commendation to say of a woman, "She is exceedingly well informed in all the literature of the day, quite learned, but she knows very little of household affairs." I believe her husband often thinks, if he does not say, "I would dispense with a great deal of her bookishness and her knowledge, if I could have the house kept in a better condition, and enjoy a little more comfort at home." Still, a wife and a mother, to all the household pre-requisites, should and may add intelligence and taste. It is indeed the perfection of womanly character, at once to "look well to the ways of her household," and also, to "open her mouth with wisdom." How impressive and attractive a scene is it to see a pious, well-informed, accomplished woman, respected as well as beloved by her husband, as his intelligent companion, esteemed by his guests, and looked up to with confidence, reverence, and affection by her children, over whose general education she presides with dignity and ability.

IV. There are some things which are not reducible to either of the other heads, and which may therefore be called general excellences of a decorative nature. These have been already dwelt upon in former discourses, and therefore need only be briefly mentioned here. We find them set forth in the early character and conduct

of Rebekah; in which we beheld modesty without silliness, frankness without forwardness, courtesy without affectation, and complaisance without servility. In short, all that maidenly reserve which would restrain whatever is obtrusive, rude, impudent, and bold; and which yet would allow of an artless, ingenuous, and unembarrassed mode of intercourse with the other sex. I have sometimes seen good women so bold, obtrusive, and imposing, as to repel and disgust. I could not doubt that they had really some religious principle within this indecorous outside, but it could scarcely be seen. In some cases it has happened that even the very profession of religion, which should have led women to draw closer the veil of modest reserve, has led them to throw it off altogether, and they seemed to act as if the Christian name, which ought to be a guarantee for all that is meek and gentle, was a sanction for unseemly forwardness. On the contrary, there are others, whose profession of religion has so disfigured them with the airs of assumed sanctity, so stiffened them into prudish reserve, and so distorted the simplicity of nature with the formalism of gloomy superstition, that they are repulsive as spectres, and lead many to exclaim, "If this be religion, it may be pure, but it is surely unlovely, and, one should imagine, as unfit for heaven, where all is joyous, as it is for earth, where if happiness be wanting, this certainly cannot supply it."

Good temper, or amiability, is essential to the adornment of a Christian profession. This has been alluded to already in more places than one, but its importance justifies the repetition. I have already admitted that there is a great difference in this respect in natural constitution. Hence it costs some immensely more

pains to acquire a small degree of this excellence, than it does others to manifest ten times the amount. And really there may be more of principle and virtue in the modicum of the one than in the abundance of the other. Some indulgence should therefore be shown to those who are born with a crabbed disposition, and they should not be judged too harshly. We see the fault, bnt not the contrition with which it is followed; nor do we witness the deep self-abasement which the ebullition of the moment inflicts for hours, if not days. But still we would enjoin on those who are conscious of this infirmity, a most anxious, earnest, and prayerful attention to the subject. Let every woman who is troubled with an over-wrought sensibility, a morbid susceptibility of offence, an unusual liability to passion, put her heart under discipline, or this her constitutional tendency will be a prolific source of misery to herself, and to others around her. It is not, however, as a source of disquietude that I now allude to it, but as a cause of scandal. A bad temper not only troubles the heart, but it disfigures the profession. Observers can see nothing to love and admire in religion, when found in company with so much ill-temper. There are some persons whose bad temper is unassociated with piety, or indeed moral worth of any kind, and they are wasps, hornets, scorpions, all venom and no honey, according to the degree of malignity they possess. There are others who have real godliness and some sterling excellence of other kinds, and they resemble bees, who though they have honey, yet are somewhat irritable, and have also a sting for those who offend them. Cultivate then a lovely and amiable temper as one of the brightest ornaments of religion. It is to religion what the burnish is to the gold, the

polish to the steel, the fragrance to the rose, the sunshine to the prospect.

There is one thing which, in addition to all that has been mentioned, is requisite to give the finishing stroke of ornament to the character of the young female professors of religion; and that is the virtue that is sometimes designated good sense, at other times prudence, at others thoughtfulness. I know such dispositions are thought by some minds to partake too much of the grave to be ornamental in youth. They may hang like rich ripe clusters round the character of the matron, but such persons think the beauty of youth consists of the picturesque, the romantic, with a tinge of the wild, the visionary, and the enthusiastic. There is no poetry they imagine in prudence, no imagination in good sense, no fancy in thoughtfulness. True, and I will concede so much as to allow that a precocious gravity, an anticipation of the sobriety of threescore years and ten, is not what I enjoin, or wish to see in youthful maidens. Even religion with all its solemn proprieties, all its heavenly sanctities, does not extinguish the vivacity, the sprightliness, the buoyancy of a girl in her teens. I love to see her sparkling eye, her sun-lit countenance, her elastic step, and to hear the merry note of her laughter, and the music of her cheerful voice. These are ornamental, they belong to her age, and the natural flow of her spirits, and it is only superstition that would turn that young and joyous creature into the stiff and silent statue, the nun-like figure, or the unsmiling devotee. But then, is it any detriment to all this innocent hilarity to have meditative thoughtfulness, an instinctive sense of propriety, cautious reserve, and accurate discrimination? Is it a blemish

rather than a beauty to be able to consider what in all circumstances is best to be done, and to be able to do it well? To act from principle rather than from impulse, and to be guided by reason rather than by feeling? To weigh words before they are spoken, and estimate actions before they are performed? Is not propriety beauty? Are freaks and caprices, whims and eccentricities, imprudence and follies, ornaments? Yes, in the estimation of that silly girl (but in hers alone), who would rather be smiled at for her wildness and her weakness, than commended for her more solid excellence. What kind of a mother is this romantic and wayward creature likely to make? Let the Christian young woman be very jealous then of this romanticism, and consider it is not in keeping with the dignity and sanctity of religion. The matrons are admonished by the apostles to teach the young women to be sober; a word that refers there not to wine, but to a prudent thoughtfulness.

Such then are the ornaments of early female religious profession. It has been throughout this chapter supposed that there may be real piety, without some of these accompaniments, a rough unpolished godliness, true but unadorned religion. One young female may be sincere in her profession of religion, and yet have an uncorrected infirmity of temper: another may be very illiterate or very weak-minded: another may be guilty of various little inconsistencies which tarnish the beauty of her profession: another may be rash, restless, and imprudent: another may be spiritually proud, and something like affectedly sanctimonious: another may be wanting in agreeable and accommodating manners or habits at home. In all these ways

and in various others religion may be disparaged, shorn of some of its beauty, rendered less attractive, and made even repulsive to those who observe it. "Let not your good," says the apostle, "be evil spoken of." Religion is itself so transcendently excellent, (being the highest glory of man, the image of God, and the temper of heaven,) that it should be exhibited to the greatest possible advantage. Who that wore the portrait of some dear friend, or suspended a picture of the queen in their house, would not wish to have it so framed as to be worthy of the subject? Who would not deprecate the idea of their keeping it either covered with dust or defilement? Religion is the only thing that can make people happy in this world, or guide them to eternal felicity in the world to come. How solemnly, tremblingly anxious should all who profess it be to exhibit it in the most advantageous light, and with the greatest and most powerful attractions! How deeply solicitous should we be, lest by anything others see in us, they should take a prejudice against it, and we should thus cast stumbling blocks in their way! How desirous should we feel, and how studious should we be, to invest our profession with whatsoever things are lovely, that others, beholding our good works, our peace of mind, our meekness, gentleness, and kindness, our usefulness and humility, should be won to Christ; that so if they will not love religion in the first instance for its own sake, they may be conciliated to it by the ornaments with which, in our case, it is decorated!

Before this chapter is concluded, I may with great propriety suppose that some will read it who have not made a profession of religion, who are not in visible connection with a Christian church, and are living in

the habitual neglect of the Lord's Supper. Making no profession of religion! How is this? Have you none to profess? Melancholy idea! No religion! Better, I admit, not to profess at all, than to profess what you do not possess, and thus add hypocrisy to your other sins. But is it not painful and fearful to think of a rational, immortal, sinful being, living without penitence, prayer, faith, and love? How can you live another hour in such a state? What are all the intellectual ornaments spoken of above, without personal piety, but a garland of beautiful flowers round the brow of a corpse; or but as diamonds sparkling on the breast of death? Oh, for your soul's sake, live no longer without remembering your Creator in the days of your youth.

Others, perhaps, will read this discourse, who, though partakers of true faith in Christ and love to God, are not yet professors of the religion they possess. We again say, How is this? Have you pondered that language of the apostle, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," or that solemn injunction of Christ, when he instituted the sacred supper, "Do this in remembrance of me." Is this the command you select from the law of the New Testament as the only one you feel at liberty to disobey? This one, so tender, so pathetic, so loving! This, delivered in sight of the cross, only a few hours before our Lord endured those agonies by which you are saved! What, neglect the command of dying love, a command so positive, an invitation so gracious, an injunction, obedience to which is at once so honourable, so happy, and so useful! What is your reason for this neglect? Do you tremble to make a profession because it is so awful? Does not

this arise from superstitious rather than religious dread? Awful! to profess the faith you exercise, and to commemorate the death of Christ! Have you not mistaken the design of the Lord's Supper; it is simply a commemorative ordinance, and are you not deluded and terrified by the mystery in which priestcraft has sought to envelope it? But, "you tremble to make a profession lest you should dishonour it, as so many have done." They have indeed, and the painful fact should lead to caution, self-examination, and earnest prayer for grace, that another stumbling-block should not be furnished by you. But the very fear will, if sincere, be your preservation from the object of your dread. The path of duty is the way of safety. Besides, are you less likely to sin without the pale of communion than within it? We invite you, therefore, if you are partakers of true faith, to profess, or to use a scriptural synonym, to confess it. The communion of saints and the participation of the Lord's Supper will by God's grace strengthen the principle, and call forth the exercise, of the Divine life, and be at once your honour and your joy.

And as to you who are already to be found in the fellowship of the faithful, I congratulate you on the choice you have made, and on the decision to which you have come. To your pastors it was a source of unspeakable pleasure to receive you among the number of the followers of the Lamb. You, in an especial manner, are their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, inasmuch as they look to you, and those who may descend from you, to fill up the places of more aged disciples, when they, according to the course of nature, shall be removed to the church triumphant. Acknowledge practically and

gratefully the grace you have received from the Lord, by using your influence with labour and judgment, to engage other young persons, your relatives and companions, to come and share with you the privileges, and enjoy the blessings of Christian communion. And to give effect to your persuasions, exhibit all the beauty of consistent example. Let religion be seen in you, combining with all its sanctities and spiritualities, the amenity of life, amiability of temper, general intelligence, correct taste, and general social excellence, which shall prepossess them in favour of genuine piety. Make it evident to them that true godliness is as happy a thing as it is a holy one. Convince them by what they see in you as well as by what they hear from you, that you have found the secret, and that your soul has touched the centre, of bliss. Let the richest excellences that can adorn the female character, all the most rare and delicate beauties that are admired in it, be strung together upon the golden thread of eminent piety, and be hung like a necklace of heavenly pearls round your profession. Thus, "Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things."

CHAPTER X.

THE CHARACTERS OF MARTHA AND MARY OF BETHANY.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost not thou care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—LUKE x, 38-42.

THIS beautiful little gem of sacred history is replete with instruction in reference to every one of the individuals which it brings before us. It is a group of characters, each possessing its own peculiar excellence and interest. It says much for the condescension, kindness, and fidelity of the chief personage of the scene; and not less for the feelings and the excellences of the other two. In the person and conduct of Jesus Christ are always combined, without being confounded, all the uncreated glories of the Godhead, and all the milder beauties of the perfect man: and if in the admiration of his humanity we are not to lose sight of his divinity,

so neither in the contemplation of his divinity are we to forget his humanity. Human nature had its consummation in him, he is its representative in its best estate, the pattern man. His greatness did not raise him above any kind of goodness or the manifestation of it. Is friendship one of the virtues of our nature, one of the bonds of society, one of the blessings of life, a sweet and lovely flower that unfolds its beauty and exhales its fragrance in the garden of our social existence? Behold in Jesus Christ this virtue in perfection! He had his attachments, not indeed capricious ones; they were all founded on the characters of their objects; but he had them. His nature was susceptible of special regards. He felt more complacency in some of those he loved than in others of them. Hence the groundlessness of the cavil against Christianity that it nowhere positively enjoins the practice of friendship; for it does more, it exhibits it in the character and conduct of its Divine Founder. For "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus:" and this was so well known, that when Lazarus was ill; "his sisters sent unto Christ, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." And where shall we find a more beautiful manifestation of friendship than in the gospel narrative of Christ's conduct when Lazarus was dead?

In entering upon this interesting history, I observe, that it is one of the peculiarities of our Saviour's discourses that he often takes occasion to graft general truths on special incidents, and makes comparatively small occurrences the vehicle of momentous instructions, in a few words bringing everlasting truth, in some important view of it, home to all times and circumstances. Standing on the spiritual centre-point, he,

without violence, entwined the minutest and least important circumstances of the present, with the loftiest eternal verities. Thus in the conduct of the two sisters before us, he places together the nothingness of all love and care for the body, in comparison with care for the soul and solicitude about that which is everlasting.

Bethany was a little village about two miles from Jerusalem, inhabited as a suburban retreat by many wealthy and respectable Jews. There dwelt Martha, who appears to have been the elder sister, and mistress of the house; her sister Mary, and a brother named Lazarus. Whether the sisters were maidens or widows, we are not informed. All we know of the family is, (and it is the best and most worthy thing to be known of them,) that they were all united, not only by the ties of nature, but of grace, they were all one in Christ, partakers of "the common salvation," by a "like precious faith."

In the bosom of this little quiet and holy family it is probable Jesus occasionally found repose after his bodily fatigues and mental sufferings in the unbelieving city: for his humanity was susceptible on the one hand of both these, as indeed of all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and on the other of the relief afforded by rest and pious converse. "O happy house," says the pious Bishop Hall, "into which the Son of God vouchsafed to set his foot! O blessed women, that had grace to be the hostesses to the Lord of Heaven and earth! How should I envy your felicity herein, if I did not see the same favour, though in a different way, if I be not wanting to myself, lying open to me!" There are two ways of receiving Christ even in the present day; in himself, by opening to him our hearts

in faith; and in his members, by opening our hands in charity, and our doors in hospitality. And Christ will esteem himself better served in these ways, than he would were he again upon earth, by being entertained in our houses.

On one occasion when the Divine Visitant made his appearance by an unexpected visit, Martha, as the head of the household, the presiding spirit of the domestic economy, with an anxiety prompted by a loving and generous heart towards her illustrious guest, not altogether, perhaps, unmixed with a desire to display her skill in good housewifery, set about providing the best and fullest entertainment the larder could afford. We can see her in the fulness of her cares and the activity of her temper, cheerfully and busily engaged in getting ready the supper. Eyeing everything with minute inspection and provident forethought, that nothing might be wanting that was worthy either of her Lord or of herself. Generous, but mistaken woman, dost thou know so little of thy Lord as to imagine he needs, or can be gratified with, all this care and provision for his sake? Hadst thou never heard that he once said to his disciples when pressed to take food, "My meat and my drink are to do the will of my Father in heaven?" Yet it was love, though mistaken love. I can fancy her saying to herself, "Can I ever do enough for him who deserves infinitely more than all I can do? Cheerfully will I give him the best I have, and the most I am able to perform. To give to Jesus, and labour for him, are my delight. He has my heart, and he shall have my hand, my feet, my house, my all."

And where all this while was Mary? Eagerly availing herself of the precious opportunity afforded by the

presence of the Great Teacher, sitting at his feet to receive instruction. Such a season might never return; and she was determined to make the best of it by listening to every word the Saviour said. Yet we are not to suppose that Martha had not been at the Master's feet at all, listening to any part of Christ's instructions, for it is said of Mary that "she also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word," evidently implying that some other had been there also, which no doubt was Martha; who, just then, like some of her sex, thinking of the house and its duties while in the sanctuary and service of God, recollected the provision which she supposed necessary, and somewhat abruptly rose up and retired from the presence of Christ to the scene of her domestic solicitude, leaving Mary to be feasted by Christ, while she goes to make a feast for him. "I know not," says the good bishop already quoted, "how to censure the holy woman for an excess of care to welcome her Saviour."

How apt are we to measure other people's sense of propriety, and rightness of conduct, by our own, and to blame them for not exercising their religion and expressing their love and obedience to Christ in our mode! Mary perhaps wondered that Martha could on any ground whatever cease to listen to the instruction of Christ, while Martha wondered no less that Mary could sit still and be a learner when she ought to have been active as a provider. Martha would be ready to blame Mary for her want of love in keeping Christ talking when she ought to have been caring for his refreshment; while Mary would be apt to blame Martha for the lukewarmness of her regard, in not eagerly catching every word that fell from his lips. Let us learn that those may equally love Christ, who do not take exactly the same

mode of showing it. Goodness is very ingenious, and while it is uniform in essentials, is multiform in circumstantials.

After waiting some time and expecting Mary to come out and assist her, and often perhaps casting a silent but reproachful look at Mary, as the door stood ajar, and she remained still sitting at the feet of Jesus, Martha's patience could endure it no longer, and in unseemly haste, ruffled temper, and irreverent manner, she entered the room, and thus addressed herself to Christ. "Lord, carest thou not that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her that she come and help me." It was a sad speech, which in her cooler moments she must have condemned. It was irreverent to Christ, for it accused him in an angry tone of neglect of her comfort. It was unkind to her sister, for it implied that she was wanting both in love to Christ and to herself. It was well she had one to deal with who knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are but dust. Why did she appeal first to Christ, and arraign her sister before him? Might she not have beckoned Mary away, or whispered in her ear? Or why when she saw her so devoutly engaged, did she not leave her to her rapt enjoyment, and say, "Happy sister, to be thus enjoying thy Lord's presence and instructions: would I could feel at liberty from these cares, and be at thy side: but somebody must provide for the comfort of the Master, and this belongs to me." Those are not always in the right who are most forward in their appeals to God. Many are more anxious to get God on their side, than to be on the side of God. We must take heed lest we expect Christ to espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels. I am afraid there was in Martha's mind at this time a little of

that envy and ill-will which is not unfrequently felt by one person at witnessing the superior piety of another. The more eminent religion of one professor is often felt to be a reproach to those who are lukewarm and worldly, and is therefore really in some cases the cause of ill-will and dislike.

We do not find that Mary uttered a syllable in reply to this vehement accusation. I can fancy her lifting up her meek and invoking eye to the Saviour, with a look which seemed to say, "O my Lord, I leave the vindication of my love to thee and to my sister, in thine hands." Gentle spirit! may we learn of thee when we are complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips in silence, and to wait till the manifestation of our innocence comes from above. And how surely will Jesus undertake our cause, and bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon day. Christ when he might have retorted with keen and cutting severity, replied only with a kind but faithful answer, in which he first rebuked her, and then justified and commended her sister. The very repetition of her name is instructive, as showing how serious Christ was in this act of reproof: "Martha, Martha:" as if he had said, "O woman, thou art very wrong." Though the wrong-doing was out of love to him, he reproved it; for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens. No faults, mistakes, or sins, are more dangerous than those which originate in misdirected love; and none should be more faithfully yet tenderly pointed out to those who commit them, as there are none which the deceitfulness of the human heart will be so backward to see and confess; none which it will be more ready to excuse and defend. The ill-directed love of friends is sometimes more mischievous than the open

hostility of foes. Now observe the rebuke of Jesus. "Thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; thy mind is full of unnecessary anxiety about those domestic matters, and disturbed by restless agitation. And what thou discoverest on the present occasion is too much thy wont on others. There is one thing far more important and far more needful than all these matters, which by losing the opportunity I now afford thee of receiving instruction, thou art sadly neglecting, I mean the care and salvation of thy immortal soul."*

Having rebuked Martha, our Lord next vindicates her sister, whom she had so severely and unmeritedly

* It has been contended by some, that by the one thing needful, our Lord intended to suggest to Martha, that instead of the abundance she was preparing, the many varieties of food she was about to place upon the table, one dish only was necessary. I will not deny that this might seem to harmonise with the occasion: much less will I deny, that it would furnish on the part of our Lord, a perpetual and merited rebuke to unnecessary and sinful care, trouble, and expense on the part of professing Christians, to provide costly entertainments for their friends. Good John Newton has some admirable remarks on the subject of entertainments given to Ministers. "Some of us would be better pleased, whatever kindness our friends design to show us, to be treated less sumptuously, and in a way more conformable to the simplicity of our Christian profession. We would not wish to be considered as avowed epicures, who cannot dine well without a variety of delicacies; and if we could suppose that such cost and variety were designed to remind us how much better we fare abroad than at home, we might think it rather an insult than a compliment." The criticism however which would make our Lord refer to such things is obviously a false one: for as Mary's conduct is opposed to that of Martha's, that which she chose, the good part, must be the same as the one thing needful; and if the one thing needful means one dish, Mary's good part must also be one dish, which she chose or provided, rather than the many which her sister was intent upon. But the suggestion of such a meaning is trifling with Scripture rather than explaining it.

reproached. "Mary hath chosen that good part which cannot be taken from her." By the good part we are to understand her sitting at Christ's feet to hear his words, rather than bustling about domestic affairs. That was the good part for the moment, but I believe our Lord meant to extend his meaning in what he said to each of the sisters, to their habitual character and conduct; and as he intended when he said to Martha, that she was too careful and too much troubled about many things, to describe her usual temperament; so when he said that Mary had chosen the good part, he designed to describe her uniform attention to the high and sacred concern of religion, and to represent her as one who had given herself to the pursuit of eternal salvation. This was matter of choice, and neither of compulsion nor of unintelligent and heartless formality. She voluntarily took up a life of piety: and in doing this had secured an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. I reserve for the conclusion of the chapter some remarks on this description of true piety.

How difficult it is to inflict reproof and not excite anger, and to bestow deserved praise without doing mischief by inflating vanity! No such injury was done in this case. The effect, both of the censure and of the praise, appears to have been beneficial; for in a subsequent chapter of this scriptural history, to which we shall presently have occasion to refer, we find the two sisters as united in affection as ever, and Martha considerably improved.

I shall now attempt an analysis and discriminating delineation of the character of these two sisters. I have already remarked that they were in one, and that

the most important, feature alike, they were both pious women, they both loved Christ. And what is religion without love to the Saviour? In making the inquiry after true piety, fix your attention, concentrate your thoughts, terminate your researches, settle your conclusions, on this simple but comprehensive idea, it is a scriptural, supreme, practical, grateful love to Christ. This Martha, as we have already asserted, undoubtedly possessed, as well as Mary. She, too, notwithstanding her failings, could have returned the same answer as did Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Underneath the superficial earthliness of that careful and troubled mind, there burnt a sacred fire of strong attachment to the Saviour. With this sameness of general character, there were circumstantial differences. Just as we have seen two flowers springing from the same root, possessing the same general characteristics, yet one bending towards the earth while the other stands erect and opens its petals more expansively to the sun. Martha and Mary are the exemplars of the peculiarities of two distinct varieties of character and religious tendencies. One the type of a naturally energetic, the other of a quiescent mind. One exhibiting excellence in action, the other in repose. One a life busily devoted to externals, the other careful only for her own religious instruction, as the one thing needful. In the one we see the contemplative christian musing and feeding in silence upon holy thoughts, and looking up in rapt meditation into heaven; in the other we see the practical christian, now lavishing her indefatigable cares upon a brother whom she loves, and now ministering in ordinary life to a Saviour whom she adores; invoking him in the bitter-

ness of grief, and blessing him in the joy of deliverance. In one, too much of the busy, careful, anxious housewife; in the other, perhaps too much of the contemplative quiescent devotee. You cannot mistake all this: it is patent to every reader. There was much that was good and useful in Martha's character. She possessed great quickness, alertness, and energy, with practical ability and good sense, which qualified her both for taking a lead herself and for giving an impulse to others; so that she was well fitted for going through with any work to be done, and was always awake to the common calls and the common cares of the ordinary domestic routine of life. And more than this, she was well prepared to work her own way, and to help others, in those emergencies of trouble and of difficulty which not unfrequently occur in the changeful scene of human existence. It is a blessed temperament, my young friends, to have that noble hardihood, untiring energy, and undaunted boldness of character, which can grapple with difficulty, surmount obstacles, and instead of being crushed by misfortune, can rise triumphant above it. But such a temperament has its dangers, and Martha fell into them. She was impetuous, irritable, intolerant, and somewhat rude. She was angry that others were not as energetic as herself, a common fault with persons of such a turn of mind. She could not make allowance for differences of disposition. She was however an excellent woman after all. "Mary was characterised by more depth of thought, more reflection, more sensibility. She was more easily engrossed by an affecting scene or any spiritual subject; more alive at any time to one single profound impression, and apt to be abstracted from other concerns."

We see the characteristics of these two sisters brought out in an affecting scene in their after history, to which I will now advert, and for the particulars of which I refer you to the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the gospel by John. Sickness in an alarming form entered this little family at Bethany, and arrested Lazarus. Jesus was at that time in Bethabara, about thirty miles from Bethany. In the agony of their grief the sisters despatched a messenger to him, under the supposition that he would come and restore their brother to health. Lazarus, it would seem, expired soon after the messenger left. On receiving the information, Christ, who knew all about the matter, and also what he would do, lingered where he was two whole days in order that the miracle which he was about to work, might, from the circumstance of the longer continuance of death, be the more signal and convincing. At length he set out for Bethany. Observe in this act his usual mercy, to travel on foot thirty miles to restore a dead man. How delightful is it thus to trace the Saviour in his journeys, justifying the description which is given of him, as one, "who ever went about doing good." Martha was the first to receive information of his approach on this occasion to Bethany, either because as the mistress of the house the intelligence was first conveyed to her, or because from her bustling and active disposition she was most likely to hear of it. And now, acting according to her character, she lost not a moment, but immediately hastened forth to meet her Lord, to render him the offices of courtesy and respect, to inform him of the calamity that had befallen them, to pour out to him the sorrows of her heart, and to receive the expressions of his sympathy. She was thus, as ever, ready to be up and doing. But

Mary, either not being informed of the coming of Jesus, or absorbed in a deeper grief, sat still in the house and waited for the entrance of the Comforter. This intensity of sorrow did not escape the notice of the Jews: hence when at length she arose at the call of her sister to go forth and meet her Lord, they said, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there." They said this from a knowledge of her character, for they made no such remark on Martha when she went forth. She might be bent on other errands. Mary could go, only to weep.

It is well observed by Dr. Candlish, in his discourse on this subject: "In different circumstances the same natural temperament may be either an advantage or a snare. Martha was never so much occupied in the emotion of one subject or scene, as not to be on the alert and ready for the call to another. This was a disadvantage to her when she was so hurried that she could not withdraw herself to wait upon the Word of Life. It is an advantage to her now, that she can, with comparative ease, shake off her depression, and hasten of her own accord to meet her Lord. The same profound feeling, again, which made Mary the most attentive listener before, makes her the most helpless sufferer now: and disposes her almost to nurse her grief, until Jesus, her best Comforter, sends specially and emphatically to rouse her. Nor is it an insignificant circumstance that it is the ever-active Martha who carries to her more downcast sister, the awakening message; so ought sisters in Christ to minister to one another, and so may the very difference of their characters make them mutually the more helpful;" "She went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee."

The two sisters both deeply affected with a sense of their loss, meet their Lord, and exhibit in this interview the same difference of character as pervades their whole history. Martha's grief is not so overwhelming as to prevent her utterance; she is calm, cool, and sufficiently collected to enter into argument. She can talk of her sorrow, can refer to her loss, can express her faith, and even modestly suggest to Christ, in a delicate and covert manner, the possibility of his restoring her brother. It was different with Mary. In piety she is of course equal to her sister, but in composure and serenity she is inferior. Her gentle spirit is paralysed with grief. All she can do is to cast herself prostrate at the feet of Christ, all she can say, is to sob out, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." We cannot pass over one more characteristic, exquisitely delicate and true to nature. Jesus, having asked where Lazarus had been laid, is conducted to the grave, which was a cave with a stone upon it, and he gives orders to take away the stone. It was not Mary who offered the objection founded on the commencement of decay, she is silent still in the unutterable agony of her grief, and the deep reverence of her soul before the Lord. But Martha's marked officiousness makes her forward when it might have been more becoming to be dumb and to stand in awe. Dr. Candlish, with nice and just discrimination, points out the wise and considerate manner, which will be observed by every judicious critical reader of the narrative, in which Christ adapts his behaviour towards the two sisters. Martha's distress was of such a nature that it admitted of discussion and discourse. Jesus accordingly spoke to her and led her to speak to him, and made to her, as suited her circumstances,

some of his sublimest communications touching the resurrection of the body and the life of the soul. While to Mary, who is wrapt in such deep grief, he shows his sympathy in a different way. He is much more profoundly moved. He does not reply to her in words, for her words are few. Sorrow has choked her utterance and over-mastered her soul. But the sight of one so dear to him, lying in such helpless grief at his feet, is an appeal to him far stronger than any supplication. And his own responsive sigh is an answer more comforting than any promise. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in spirit and was troubled." And when he had asked of the by-standers, where they had laid him, and received the reply, "Come and see," like Joseph, "he could no longer refrain himself," "Jesus wept."

"O most blessed mourner, with whose tears thy Saviour mingles his own! O sympathy most unparalleled! To each of the two stricken and afflicted ones, our Lord addressed the very consolation that was most congenial. With Martha, Jesus discoursed and reasoned: with Mary, 'Jesus wept.'" It is thus He who knows our frame adapts the communications of his grace, as our temperament and circumstances most need them.

Before we quit this scene of domestic grief, and pass to another incident in the history of Martha and Mary, shall we not turn aside to see this great sight exhibited in the conduct of Jesus? I know I am giving the history of Martha and Mary, but was not Christ so blended with it as to form a part of it, and to constitute the glory of it? Shall I take you to the grave of Lazarus, point you to the mourning sisters, and omit to

notice the weeping Saviour? Shall I pass over that short but wondrous verse, which tells us with such sublime simplicity, Jesus wept? Every view of Christ is glorious; whether reigning upon his throne in the glory he had with the Father before the world was; or agonising in the garden, when he sweat as it were great drops of blood; or hanging upon the cross the great sacrifice for sin; or rising from the grave with the keys of death and of Hades at his girdle; or ascending to his glory amidst the retinue and acclamations of angels. Now all these manifestations produce feelings of awe and wonder. But oh, his weeping at the grave of Lazarus! The Son of God in tears, not as on the Mount of Olivet, when he signed the death-warrant of Jerusalem, and looked onward from the destruction of the guilty city, to the torments of eternity, of which its fires and plagues were a dark type, no! his tears on this occasion were those of human tenderness, the exquisite sympathy of his noble and perfect manhood with the afflictions of those whom he loved. How many lessons are taught us by those tears. Have they not vindicated and defended humanity from the insults and injuries of stoicism, and made chastened sorrow one of its genuine workings? Have they not consecrated sympathy as one of the virtues of humanity? Have they not made tenderness the adornment of greatness? Have they not raised friendship to the rank of a Christian excellence? Have they not proved that he has not the mind of Christ who knows not how to weep for the woes of our nature? Jesus wept. There were critics in ancient times who with ruthless fingers cancelled this verse, as thinking it beneath the dignity of Jesus to weep. Barbarian critics! stoical scholars! ye would

have robbed the Scriptures of one of their brightest gems, and despoiled the character of the Saviour of one of its richest beauties.

But now after this, not I hope ungraceful episode, let us pass on to one more scene in the history of this happy, holy family. About four months after the resurrection of Lazarus, a supper was given to our Lord and his disciples (most likely on account of the resurrection of Lazarus, who with his sisters were perhaps relations of the host), by a man named Simon, who had been a leper, and had in all probability been healed by Christ. At this supper Lazarus and Martha and Mary were present. Here also we find the contrast existing between the characters of the two sisters maintained with unbroken continuity and unvarying uniformity. Martha, ever active, ever generously attentive to the comforts of others, ever to be found where energy is required, "served." She had assisted in the preparation, and now busies herself in waiting upon the guests, and especially upon the most distinguished of them all, her Lord and Master whom she loved. Not so with Mary; in that assembly all were forgotten by her but one, on whom she gazed long with the silent rapture of love and devotion, waiting and watching for her opportunity to give him a meditated, practical, and personal expression of her adoring gratitude and affection. While, according to the custom of the times, he was reclining at table on his couch (not sitting upright as we do on chairs), she stole behind him, and unrestrained by the presence of the guests, brought an alabaster box of spikenard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus and then wiped his feet with her hair. She gave him the most costly article of her toilet, and employed for

him the most ornamental part of her person. For who that loves Christ will not give him the richest and best of their possessions? Was not this Mary all over? Sensibility, gratitude, affection? Does it not harmonize with the listener and mourner whom we have already witnessed? From one of the company, I mean the traitor who sold his master for thirty pieces of silver, this act of pious affection and liberality drew forth a censure, and under a hypocritical profession of concern for the poor, he expressed his regret that the precious ointment had not been sold and given to the fund for charity. Ah, how often has a plea of charity served as a cloak for covetousness! True it is, as a general principle, that great expense in external magnificence, even when designed to honour Christ, would most commonly be better employed in feeding and clothing his members; but there are some extraordinary occasions when some sort of profusion is not to be blamed. And everything which is given to Christ is acceptable to him when, as in this case, it is love that gives it. Happy is the person who knows like Mary to make that an offering and expression of love to the Saviour, which in her days of worldliness and folly she has offered at the shrine of vanity. Jesus becomes her vindicator against the cavils of Judas, and pronounced an eulogium which the loftiest monarch on earth might covet to receive, "She hath done what she could." Of how few can this be said: and yet what lower rule of conduct ought any of us to prescribe for himself than this? Is less than what we can do for Christ enough to do for him? Have you ever weighed in seriousness of mind this noble testimony, "She hath done what she could." What can you do for Christ? What have you done?

What ought you to do? What will you do? Be Mary's memorial yours. And to what renown did it raise her? "Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." How literally has this been fulfilled. Wherever the Bible has gone, in one hundred and fifty languages, this has been published to the world. And all nations will know of Mary's alabaster box of ointment consecrated to Jesus, and will venerate her memory for this act of pious zeal. The world is a poor judge in matters relating to God; and God takes delight in honouring those actions which the world blames, through a spirit different from his. Happy are those who are content with the approbation of him who sees the heart. The contradictions and groundless censures of men pass away like the clouds that occasionally veil the sun; but the good actions which are the subject of their envy or their calumny, will remain for ever, splendid as the great luminary itself. Good works embalm the memory with an odour more precious and lasting than the perfume of Mary's spikenard.

Reference has been made to this incident, and especially to the praise bestowed by our Lord upon Mary, to prove that the contemplative life is more acceptable in the sight of God than the active. It is this mistaken notion which led to the establishment of conventual institutions; a system which is no less opposed to the dictates of revelation than it is to the impulses of nature and the welfare of society; which does violence to humanity in order to do honour to Christianity; which stifles all the instinctive yearnings of the heart under the pretext of giving better opportunity for the exercises

of devotion; and which, as a natural and necessary consequence, has deposited a muddy soil of immorality upon the surface of Christendom, where the fruits of righteousness cannot grow, though the weeds of superstition may flourish with a rank luxuriance. The supposition that superior sanctity attaches to celibacy, on the one hand is one of the supports on which the whole Papal system rests, and on the other has been the cause of more abomination in the world than any other single opinion claiming to have a religious sanction. That the history before us will furnish no support to this system is evident. Mary, neither at the time spoken of was a nun, nor did she ever become such. Hers was a piety that blended with, and sanctified, the duties of social life. Whatever was her devotional taste and disposition, it did not drive her from her home, nor cut the ties of her relationships. The design of our Lord's language is not so much to form a comparison between two courses of life, so separate and distinct as not to allow of the mixture of one with the other, as to administer a rebuke to a person who pursuing one course had too much neglected the other. Not to prevent Mary from attending at all to temporal matters, but to engage Martha to less anxiety about them, and to a stricter regard to things unseen and eternal.

And now, my young friends, what in the review of this beautiful little narrative do I recommend? Which of the two characters do I enjoin you to imitate? I answer, all that was excellent in both, without the imperfections of either. Martha's household diligence, without her excessive anxiety, united with Mary's fervent devotion, without her somewhat superabundant sensibility. So far as it could be said of Martha, "She

looked well to the ways of her household," let my female friends imitate her due attention to home duties, her cleverness, her diligence, her dispatch, her generous attention to the comfort of her guests, especially those who represent their Lord. Let them be skilled in all the important functions of good housewifery. Let them, if wives, know how to make home comfortable for their husbands; if mothers, for their children; and if widely connected, for their friends. Hospitality is a virtue which should never be wanting in a female heart. She who will not seek to please her husband's friends, but receives them with a frown, will soon learn to leave off pleasing him, and make their home unhappy for all parties. But then, let all this be without carefulness, and with that graceful and pleasant ease, which will be ensured by order, method, punctuality, and dispatch.

There are various kinds of slavery in the world, and many classes of victims of this cruel bondage. There is among others, the domestic slave, whose tyrant is her husband, and the scene of her bondage, her home. His parsimony is so niggardly, that he will not allow her servants enough to do the work of the house, and therefore she must herself unite the character of a servant with that of a wife, a mistress, and a mother; his selfishness is so engrossing and exacting, that his demands for his own personal ease and indulgence are incessant, and leave her no time for the consideration of her own comfort: and withal, his temper is so bad, that all her assiduities to please are unavailing to give him satisfaction, and to avert the sallies of his irritability, discontent, and complaint. When such a man declaims against negro-slavery, let him begin the work of emancipation at home, by raising the oppressed woman he

holds in bondage there, from the condition of a drudge, into the station of a wife. How can she help being careful and troubled about many things?

But then there are cases, not a few, in which the slavery is self-imposed. The bondage comes from the wife herself, from which the husband would gladly release her, but she will not let him. Some are slaves to neatness, and make their fidgetty anxiety about this matter a misery to themselves and all around them. Others to fashion, and are always careful and troubled about elegance and refinement. Others to domestic display, parties and amusements, and are always full of anxiety about making an appearance. Others to frugality, and are ever vexing themselves to economise. In these ways women will torment themselves and fill their minds with unnecessary cares and self-imposed troubles. To all such we say, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things."

With Martha's better qualities, her domestic cleverness and diligence, unite then the fervent piety of Mary. Will you be satisfied with that excellence which fits you only to fill up your place in a habitation from which you may be called away any hour? Be as diligent, I entreat you, in business, as Martha was; but be also as fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, as Mary was. Seek to unite all the holy virtues of the eminent saint, with all the household excellences of the good wife, mother, and mistress. Be all you should be in your own house, and all you ought to be in the house of God. What your husbands, when you have them, will desire and expect, is to see you at your post of duty in the family. Meet their desires and fulfil these expectations. You ought, you must. What Christ desires and expects, is to see

you sitting at his feet and hearing his word. Meet these desires and expectations also. You ought, you must. Study the following portrait of a good wife, a cultivated mind, and a sincere Christian, drawn by the pen of Jane Taylor.

> "And she whose nobler course is seen to shine
> At once with human knowledge and divine;
> Who mental culture, and domestic rites,
> In close and graceful amity unites.
> Striving to keep them in their proper place,
> Not interfering with her heavenly race;
> Whose constant aim it is, and fervent prayer,
> On earthly ground to breathe celestial air."

O! ye too anxious and careful housewives, lessen your solicitude. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God." The spirit and influence of vital piety will soften the cares of domestic life, and alleviate its sorrows, where they exist, and inspire an alacrity which will make you go cheerfully about the business of the family: while well regulated attention to domestic duties, so far from unfitting you for the exercise of devotion, will furnish the subjects of your prayers, and prompt the approaches of your soul to God.

And now, in conclusion, let me exhibit to you the description of true religion, as set forth in the language of Christ to Martha. It is indispensable, "One thing is needful." Yes, the care of the soul is indeed needful. Mark the restriction and emphasis, one thing: and it deserves this emphasis. It is a matter of universal concern; necessary for all alike; for the rich and the poor; for the young and the old; for male and female. Some things are necessary for one person, but not for another; this is necessary for all alike. It is in itself

a matter of the highest importance, of infinite moment, compared with which all the most valuable objects of time and sense are but as the small dust of the balance. It will promote every other lawful and valuable interest on earth. It has been pronounced indispensable by those who are most capable of giving an opinion. God has declared it to be needful, by giving his only-begotten Son to die for it upon the cross. Jesus Christ has declared it to be needful, by enduring the agonies of the cross to obtain it. Angels have pronounced it needful by their solicitude for the salvation of men. Apostles, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and ministers have given their emphatic testimony to its necessity by their labours, prayers, tears, and blood. Your own judgment, in the cooler moments of reflection, declares its necessity; so does your conscience when you are listening to sermons, or suffering affliction: so does your heart, when the world stands revealed before you in its vanity, emptiness, and deceit. It is needful now in youth to be your guide; it will be no less so as your comforter amidst the vicissitudes of life; your prop under the infirmities of age: your living hope amidst the agonies of dying hours; your defence in the awful day of judgment; and your preparation for the felicities of heaven. Must not that which alone can do this, be indispensable, and be in fact the one thing needful? Dwell, I beseech you, upon this representation. If religion were as miserable and as melancholy as your mistaken notions of it represent, yet it is needful. It is not what you may not have, and yet do well without it, a superfluity, but not a necessary. No. It is needful. Nothing else can be substituted for it, or in the smallest degree compensate for the want of it. In the

absence of this, you want the most necessary thing in the universe, you must be poor amidst abounding wealth. And it is the only thing that is indispensable. There are many other things which are desirable, valuable, pleasurable, and may be lawfully pursued; but they are not indispensable. This is absolutely so to secure solid happiness here and eternal felicity hereafter. O, young people, call in your vagrant thoughts, your discursive inquiries, your divided and scattered activities, and concentrate them upon this one thing. Settle it with yourselves, that whatever else you may not have, you must have this. It is well at the outset of life to be informed, by an authority which is infallible, what is most necessary for the pilgrim upon earth. Let me entreat you to remember your own interest in it; it is necessary for you, whose eye shall read this page. Do therefore inquire, solemnly and seriously enquire, into your own conduct in reference to it. Say to yourselves, "Have I thought seriously about it? Have I seen the importance of it? Has it lain with a due and an abiding weight upon my mind? Has it brought me in penitence, prayer, and faith, to Christ as my Saviour? Am I acting in life as if I considered religion the one thing needful. Am I striving or willing to make everything subordinate to it, my interests, my tastes, my pleasures, my passions?"

And then how transcendently excellent is true religion. It is the "good part which shall never be taken from us." Excellent it is, in every view we can take of it, for it is the reception of the first truth, and the enjoyment of the chief good. It makes us good, for it makes us like God, and brings good to us, for it leads us to enjoy God. It was the bliss of Adam in

Paradise, and is the happiness of the spirits made perfect in heaven. It is the beginning of heaven upon earth, and will be the consummation of heaven when we have left earth. It is far better than knowledge, wealth, fame, or pleasure, for it will stand by us when all these things leave us.

Yes, it is, "the good part, which can never be taken from us." Neither force nor fraud can deprive us of this. It is above the vicissitudes of life, and unaffected by the changes of fortune. Oh, it is glorious to think of our possessing something that bids defiance to all the assaults of men or demons! Go where you will, it will go with you. It will be as inseparable from you, till you yourself shall abandon it, as your soul is from your body. How much then is included in that precious declaration, "The good part which cannot be taken from you," which shall remain with you, in you, for you, when friends have left you, health has left you, fortune has left you, a portion all-sufficient, inalienable, eternal.

Religion is a voluntary thing, "Mary hath chosen that good part which cannot be taken from her." It is not the external compulsion of authority, nor the internal compulsion of fear, but the free choice of love. It is not mere blind, unintelligent custom; an unmeaning, heartless round of ceremonies, performed without motive or design. No, it is the free-will offering of the soul to God, who says, "Give me thine heart;" and to whom the soul replies, "I give myself to thee." Where there is no choice, there is no religion. Hence the language of Moses to the children of Israel, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:

therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." So it is with you at this moment. There on the one hand is religion with all its duties and its privileges: its present enjoyments and its future eternal happiness, this is life, the life of the soul now, and eternal life hereafter. There on the other hand is ungodliness, with all its sins and sorrows here, and its unutterable and eternal miseries hereafter. There are you so fearfully and wonderfully placed between the two. And I am (O, solemn and momentous position!) urging you by every motive that can appeal to your reason, your heart, your conscience, and even your self-love, to urge you to choose life. You must make your election. You cannot evade the choice. One or the other must be yours. Were you to attempt neutrality, it is impossible. Those that do, by true religion, not choose life, are considered by God as choosing death. By what witnesses are you surrounded in this crisis of your being! What spectators are looking on upon this eventful scene of your history! Parents are waiting, watching, and praying for your decision on the side of eternal life. With silent, breathless earnestness, they are agonizing for your soul and her destiny. Ministers are fixing their minds intently upon your situation, and in yearning anxiety for your welfare are saying, "O that they may choose the good part which can never be taken from them." Angels with benevolence hover over you, ready to commence their benevolent activities, and become as ministering spirits to your salvation. Devils with malignity are collecting to rejoice, with such delight as demons can experience, in your election of death. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are waiting, witnessing, and ready to assist your election. Yes, such value is

there attaching to one human soul; with such importance is its decision for the choice or refusal of religion invested, that heaven, earth, and hell are in some measure moved by the scene of its being called to choose between life and death, and thus three worlds are interested in the issue. Make then your election. Pause, ponder, and pray; it is a choice which eternity will confirm to your unutterable torment, or to your ineffable felicity. Almighty God, direct their choice!

CHAPTER XI.

TO YOUNG MOTHERS.

I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice. 2 TIMOTHY, i, 5.

The aged women likewise, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. TITUS ii, 3-5.

WHAT associations with all that is lovely are connected with that blissful word, a mother! To that sound the tenderest emotions of the human heart, whether in the bosom of the savage or the sage, wake up. The beauty of that term is seen, and its power felt, alike by the prince and the peasant, the rustic and the philosopher. It is one of the words which infant lips are first taught to lisp, and the charm of which the infant heart is first to feel. It is a note to the music of which it is difficult to say whose soul most responsively vibrates, that of the parent or the child. Humanity, however semi-brutalised by oppression, by ignorance, or even by vice, has rarely been sunk so low as to have the last spark of maternal love extinguished, or the last sensibility of this kind crushed out of it.

This strength of woman's love to her child must be turned to good account, and be directed in its exercises to the best and most useful purposes. There is this difference, and it is a momentous one, between the maternal care of the lower tribes and that of woman; in brutes it goes no further than provision and protection, training forms no part of it. The same power which endowed the parent bird or beast with the habits which belong to its nature, endows also its offspring. The latter, without any pains bestowed on its education, or any solicitude cherished for its welfare, will learn the lessons of its existence by the intuitions of nature, and be capable of rising to its specific perfection, unaided either by parent or teacher. Not so the young of the human species; they also require provision and protection; but more than this they need instruction. And who must be their instructor? First of all, and chief of all, their mother.

But before we reason and descant upon the subject of a mother's duties, let us look at facts. It is universally admitted that scarcely any great man has appeared in our world who did not owe much, if not most, in the formation of his character, to his mother's influence. In a very useful little volume, by Dr. Jabez Burns, entitled "The Mothers of the Wise and Good," there is a series of biographical memorials of eminent sons of pious and judicious mothers, amounting to about fifty, among whom are included Alfred the Great, Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Sir William Jones, and General Washington, among the illustrious of this world; with St. Augustin, President Edwards, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Dwight, Mr Newton, Mr Cecil, Leigh Richmond, and many others among the

good; all of them blessed with pious or eminently judicious mothers, to whom they owed their eminence in the church or in the world. From among these I select the following:

Richard Cecil, of London, when but a young man, had pursued a bold and determined career, till sunk in sin, hardening himself in infidelity, and instilling the same principles into others, there seemed no prospect of any change in him. His excellent mother, however, had performed her part, and still remembered that it was good, not only to pray always, but not to faint, or desist upon any account. At last, one night he lay contemplating the case of his mother: "I see," said he within himself, "two unquestionable facts: first, my mother is greatly afflicted in circumstances, body, and mind; and yet I see that she cheerfully bears up under all, by the support she derives from constantly repairing to her closet and her Bible: secondly, that I, who give an unbounded loose to my appetites, and seek pleasure by every means, seldom or never find it. If there is such a secret in religion, why may I not find it as well as my mother?" He instantly rose and began to pray, but was soon damped by recollecting that much of his mother's comfort seemed to arise from her faith in Christ. "Now," thought he, "this Christ I have ridiculed: He stands much in my way, and can form no part of my prayers." In utter confusion he lay down again; but in process of time, conviction of sin continuing, his difficulties were gradually removed, his objections answered. He now listened to those admonitions of his mother, which he had before affected to receive with pride and scorn, (though they had fixed themselves in his heart like a barbed arrow,) and tears would fall from

his eyes as he passed along the street, from the impression she had made on his mind, though the effects were concealed from her observation. He would, however, discourse with her, and hear her without outrage, which revived her hopes, especially as he also attended the public worship of God. Thus he made some progress, but felt no small difficulty in separating from his favourite connexions. Light, however, broke into his mind, till at last he discovered that Jesus Christ, so far from "standing in the way," as he once thought, was indeed "the way, the truth, and the life, to all who come unto God by him."

At a pastoral conference, held not long since, at which about one hundred and twenty American clergymen, united in the bonds of a common faith, were assembled, each was invited to state the human instrumentality to which, under the Divine blessing, he attributed a change of heart. How many of these, think you, gave the honour of it to their mother? Of one hundred and twenty, above one hundred! Here then are facts, which are only selected from myriads of others, to prove a mother's power, and to demonstrate at the same time her responsibility. But how shall we account for this? What gives her this influence? What is the secret of her power? Several things.

First, there is no doubt the ordinance of God. He that created us, and formed the ties of social life, and who gave all the sweet influences and tender susceptibilities of our various relationships, appointed that a mother's power over the soul of her child should be thus mighty. It is God's ordinance, and the woman who forgets or neglects this, is disobedient to a Divine

institute. God has made the child to be peculiarly susceptible of this power over his nature.

Then comes a mother's love, which is stronger, at any rate more tender, than a father's. There is more of instinct, if not of reason, in her affection. She has had more to do with the physical being of her child, having borne him in her womb, and fed him from her breast, and watched him in his cradle: all this naturally and necessarily generates a feeling which nothing else can produce. Now love is the great motive power in, and for, human conduct. "I drew them," said God, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Here is the true philosophy of both man's natural constitution and of evangelical religion. Human nature is made to be moved and governed by love: to be drawn with the cords of affection, rather than to be dragged with the chains of severity. And woman's heart is made to love; and love is exerted more gently, sweetly, and constrainingly upon her child, by her than by the other sex. It makes her more patient, and more ingenious, and therefore, more influential. Her words are more soft, her smile more winning, her frown more commanding, because less terrific and repulsive. The little floweret she has to nurture, opens its petals more readily to the mild beams of her countenance. Hence, to repeat an expression of Monod, already quoted, "The greatest moral power in the world is that which a mother exercises over her young child." Nor is there much exaggeration in that other expression, "She who rocks the cradle rules the world." An expression, the truth of which will appear to be founded on the next particular.

The mother has most to do with the character, while

yet in the flexible state in which it receives its shape. The earliest exercises of thought, emotion, will, and conscience, are all carried on under her eye. She has to do not only with the body in its infancy, but with the soul in its childhood. Both mind and heart are in her hands at that period, when they take their first start for good or for evil. The children learn to lisp their first words, and to form their first ideas, under her teaching. They are almost always in her company, and are insensibly to themselves and imperceptibly to her, receiving a right or wrong bias from her. She is the first model of character they witness; the first exhibitions of right and wrong in practice are what they see in her. They are the constant observers of the passions, the graces, the virtues, and the faults, which are shewn in her words, temper, and actions. She is therefore unconsciously to herself educating them, not only by designed teaching, but by all she does or says in their presence. Children are imitative creatures. During the minority of reason, imitation is the regent of the soul, and they who are least swayed by the former are most governed by the latter. Speech is the effect of imitation, not intuition; and as children so early and so insensibly learn to repeat sounds, so may they also learn to copy actions and habits. This applies to the mother in a fuller sense than it does to the father of course, just because she is more constantly with the children in the early stages of their existence. It is therefore of immense importance that every one who sustains this relation should have a high idea of her own power. She should be deeply and duly impressed with the potency of her influence. This has peculiar force in reference to the mothers of the middle, and still

more to those of the working, classes. In the upper circles of society, the task of educating the infant, is usually devolved upon servants. The nursery is not much, it is to be feared, the resort of many titled or wealthy mothers. Aristocratic habits, in some cases, can scarcely be made to square with maternal ones. Happy are the women who are not lifted by rank or wealth out of the circle of those tender and constant assiduities which an infant family requires; out of whose hand fashionable etiquette or luxurious indolence has not taken what the poet so pleasingly characterizes as the

> "Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
> And teach the young idea how to shoot."

Mothers then should be thoroughly acquainted with the work that is allotted to them. I speak not of the physical training of the children, that is not my department; nor primarily of their intellectual culture; but of their social, moral, and religious education. A mother's object and duty, are the formation of character. She has not merely to communicate knowledge, but habits. Her especial department is to cultivate the heart, and to regulate the life. Her aim must be not only what her children are to know, but what they are to be and do. She is to look at them as the future members of society, and heads of families of their own, but above all as probationers for eternity. This, I repeat, must be taken up as the primary idea, the formation of character for both worlds. Governesses, tutors, masters, will most probably be employed in the future intellectual training; but a mother's part is from infancy to form habits. Many have no other idea of education than the communication of knowledge. Much has been

said of late years on the distinction between instruction and education. They are by no means synonymous. The etymology of the two words is worth considering. To "instruct," is derived from a Latin word, which signifies "to put on," or "in." To instruct is therefore simply to put knowledge into the mind. The word "educate," comes also from a Latin word, which signifies to lead or draw forth. To educate, therefore, means to draw out the faculties of the soul, to call into exercise and invigorate its intellectual and moral powers. Both together constitute the duty of those who have to form the character. Ideas must be poured in, and the recipient must be taught what to do with them. We hear much said about accomplishments, which may be well enough in their place and in their measure, but they are only subordinate to something higher and better. They are not the whole of education, nor even the best part of it. They are only the polish of the surface, there should be solid gold for the substance. The intellectual part of our nature may be considered as merely the casket, the moral part as the jewel. Yet many leave the diamond uncut and unpolished, while they are careful to load its case with tinsel. A mother should look upon her offspring with the idea, "That child has to live in two worlds, and to act a part in both; and it is my duty to begin his education for both, and to lay in infancy the foundation of his character and happiness for time and eternity too. What ought to be my qualifications, and my diligence, for such a task?" Ah, what? Deep thoughtfulness certainly on the momentous nature of your charge. It is an awful thing to be a parent, especially a mother, and to have the training of men and women, both for

time and for eternity. A distinguished philosopher has said that "all the world is but the pupil and disciple of female influence." Every mother, therefore, has, so far as her individual influence goes, the world for her scholar. O woman! your child's welfare for all time and all eternity too, depends much upon your conduct towards him during the period he is under your influence in the first years of his being. To you is committed the care of the infant's body, the healthfulness, the vigour, and comfort of which for all his future existence upon earth depend much upon you. What would be your feelings of poignant remorse, if by any neglect of yours, if by a fall, or an accident, the result of your carelessness, the poor babe was injured in his spine, or distorted in his limbs! Oh! to see that young cripple injured for life in bodily comfort, ever presenting to you the sad memorials of your guilty neglect! Yet what is this to the sadder spectacle of a deformed and crippled soul, a character distorted into crooked and frightful shapes, and to have the tormenting reflection, that this was the result of your neglect! The poor child in the former case may have his compensation in all the sweet influences of religious submission and consolation, and the distressed mother may assuage the anguish of remorse by the thought that her neglect may have been among the all things that worked together for good to her son: but where in the latter case is consolation to be obtained, or who can wonder that such a Rachel mourning over her lost child, lost through her neglect, refuses to be comforted?

Qualify yourself for maternal duties above all things by sincere and eminent piety. A mother should never forget that those little engaging creatures which sport

about the room so gaily and so innocently, with all the unconsciousness of childhood, are young immortals; beings destined to eternity; creatures placed on earth on probation for heaven; and that much will depend upon her whether the everlasting ages shall be spent by them in torment or in bliss. This is an all but overwhelming idea. One should almost think that solicitude about this matter would be so overpowering as to extinguish parental delight. But a mother cannot look at the babe that is feeding at her breast, and smiling sweetly in her face as if it meant the thanks it had not yet learnt to speak; or watch his slumbers in his cradle, breathing as softly as if he lived without breathing at all; and at the same time feel her soul shiver and shudder in the dark shadow cast over her spirit by such a thought as "Oh, shouldst thou live to be a profligate in this world, and a fiend in the next!" Instead of a reflection so harrowing to every maternal feeling, she exults in the hope that the dear babe will be a holy, useful, happy Christian on earth, and then a glorified immortal in heaven. Such reflections ought to be sometimes in the mind of every parent. All should realise the sublime idea that their houses are the seminaries for eternity; their children the scholars; themselves the teachers; and evangelical religion the lesson. Yes, with every infant born into the family comes the injunction from God, "Take this child and bring it up for me." It is one of God's own children by creation, sent to be trained up in the way he should go, that is in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those parents who neglect the religious education of their children, whatever else they may impart, are more guilty than Herod. He slew the children of others,

they slay their own. He slew only the body, they the soul. He slew them by hired assassins, they slay them themselves. We shudder at the cruelties of those who sacrificed their babes to Moloch; but how much more dreadful an immolation do they practise, who offer up their sons and daughters to Satan, by neglecting their religious education, and leaving them to grow up in ignorance of God and their eternal destiny.

But can any one, will any one, teach, or teach effectually, that religion which she does not feel and practise, herself? Therefore I say a mother's heart must be deeply imbued with piety, if she would teach it to her children. Without this, can she have the will to teach, the heart to pray, the right to hope? Mothers, can you conceive of a higher, nobler elevation to which in your maternal relation you can rise, than when, to the opening mind of your wondering child, you give the first idea of God? Or when you direct him to that divine babe who was born at Bethlehem; was subject to his parents; grew into the Saviour, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," and took them in his arms and blessed them; and then died for their salvation upon the cross? Or than when you talk to them of heaven, the dwelling-place of God and of his angels? O! to see the first look of holy inquisitiveness, and the first tear of infant piety start in the eye; to hear the first question of concern, or the first breathing of prayer from infant lips! How has many a woman's heart amidst such scenes swelled with delight, till in an ecstasy of feeling she sank upon her knees and breathed a mother's prayer over the child of her heart, while he looked wonderingly up and felt a mysterious power come over him which he could neither fully

express nor understand! Your religion, if it be genuine, will teach you at once the greatness of the work, and your own insufficiency to perform it aright in your own strength. Your business is to train mortals for earth, and immortal beings for God, heaven, and eternity. Even an apostle in the view of such an object exclaimed, "And who is sufficient for these things?" Your work, as to its design, is the same as his; and you, like him, have to contend with the depravity of human nature, and all the difficulties arising from your own weakness and sinfulness. A mistake either in your sentiments, your feelings, or your example, may be fatal to your children's eternal welfare. Cultivate, then, a trembling consciousness of your own insufficiency, and cast yourselves by believing, constant, and fervent prayer upon God. Be in an eminent sense, praying mothers. Distrust yourselves; and by believing prayer, secure the aid of Omnipotence.

Do not forget what I have already said, that affection is the golden key fitted by God to the wards of the lock in every human heart, to the application of which the bolts that nothing else could move will fly back and open with ease. Severity is out of place in any one, but most of all in woman. But beware of allowing affection to degenerate into a fond and foolish indulgence. A judicious love is as remote from this on the one hand as it is from moroseness and cruelty on the other. For if severity has slain its thousands, injudicious and pampering indulgence has slain its tens of thousands. Fathers are apt to err in the former extreme, mothers in the latter. And it not unfrequently happens that these extremes are played off against each other. The father afraid that the mother

will spoil the child by indulgence, adopts a harsh treatment to counteract the mischief of his wife's excessive fondness; while the wife compensates the child for the severity of the husband by her own excessive attention to his gratification. Thus, like the sharp frost by night, and the hot sun by day, operating in spring to the destruction of the blossom on which their antagonistic influences are made to bear, the opposing treatment of the parents ruins the hapless child that is the subject of it.*

Still, while I enjoin affection, it must not be allowed to impair authority. A parent must not be a tyrant, so neither must he be a slave to his children. It is a painful, and, to the parents, a disgraceful spectacle, to see a family like a state where rebellion reigns rampant, the father deposed, the sceptre broken, and the insurgent children possessed of sovereign rule. And a mother, as well as a father, must be obeyed; and it is her own fault if she is not. A persevering system of government, where the reins are held tightly in the hand of love, will be sure to produce submission at last. But it must be a mixture of kindness, wisdom, and

* One of the most artistic, as well as instructive, characters in that wonderful book which has burst upon this country, as well as the United States of America, as a literary phenomenon, is that little imp of ignorance and wickedness, whom slavery had made half idiot and half demon, but who, by the touch of the magic wand of love, rose up from the degradation into which the heel of oppression had trodden her, a new creature in Christ Jesus. There is more of the true philosophy of human nature and of Christianity in that example, than in all the volumes which writers on humanity have ever written. And had that extraordinary volume been written for the exhibition of no other character than that of poor Topsy, by which to show what love can do for the most hopeless subjects, it would not have been published in vain.

authority. Submission must be felt by a child to be a duty yielded to authority, and not merely a compliance won by affection. Authority must not stiffen into severity, nor love degenerate into coaxing. Commands should be obeyed, not only because it is pleasant to obey them, but because it is right that they should be obeyed.

A judicious mother will exercise much discrimination, and adapt her treatment to the disposition of her children. There are as many varieties of temperament in some families as there are children. No two are precisely alike in their minds and character any more than in their persons. One is forward and obtrusive, and should be checked and rebuked; another is timid and retiring, and needs to be encouraged and emboldened. One is more easily wrought upon by appeals to her hope; another by reasonings addressed to her fear. One is too close and reserved, and needs to have frankness and communicativeness encouraged; another is too open and ingenuous, and should be taught caution and self-restraint. Every child should be a separate study. Quackery should be banished from education as well as from medicine. One treatment will no more suit all minds, than one medicine or kind of food all bodies. A woman who does not know the peculiar dispositions of all her children, and does not adapt her treatment to them, is a very indifferent mother.

The woman who would fulfil the duties of her relationship, must surrender herself to her mission, and be content to make some sacrifices, and endure some privations. Who can witness the patient submission of the mother-bird to her solitude and self-denial during the term of incubation, without admiration at the quiet and

willing surrender which instinct teaches her to make of her usual liberty and enjoyments? A woman must be willing, for the sake of her children, to do under the influence of reason and religion what the bird does from the unintelligent impulses of nature. Her children are a charge for which she must forego some of the enjoyments of social life, and even some of the social pleasures of religion. She who would have a maternal power over her children, must give her company to them. It is not for her to be ever craving after parties, or to feel it a hardship that she is denied them. The secret of her beneficent influence lies in a life of retirement. Hence the exhortation of the apostle in the text, to the matrons of his time, "Teach the young women to be . . . keepers at home." I would not have a mother incarcerated in her own house, so as never to go abroad or enter into company. She who is devoted to her family needs occasional relaxation amidst the pleasures of society, and especially the exhilarating engagements of public worship. There are some mothers who are such absolute slaves to their children that they scarcely ever stir from home, even to the house of God. This is an error in one extreme, which might be avoided by method and dispatch. But those run into an opposite extreme who will not, even for the benefit of their children, give up a social party or a public meeting. The woman who is not prepared to make many sacrifices of this kind, for the sake of her children, and her home, and her husband, should never think of entering into wedded life.

Be ingenious, inventive, and studious, as to the best method of gaining the attention, and informing the minds of your children while young. There are too many who

imagine that education, and especially religious education, consists in just hearing a chapter read, a catechism taught, or a hymn repeated, and that when this is done, all is done. The memory is the only faculty they cultivate; the intellect, affections, and conscience, are wholly neglected. A Christian mother should set herself to invent the best mode of gaining attention and keeping it, and she should never weary it, or keep it so long that it wanders off itself. How ingenious was the device of Doddridge's mother in teaching him Scripture history by the Dutch tiles of the chimney-place. The illustrated works which in this fertile age are perpetually issuing from the press, afford advantages for conveying both secular and sacred knowledge, of which by-gone times knew nothing.

Be familiar in your religious instruction. The freedom of incidental conversation, rather than the formality of set and stated lessons; the introduction of religious topics in the common intercourse of life, rather than the grave and forbidding annunciation of a change from secular to sacred subjects; and the habit of referring all things to God, and comparing the truths and maxims of the Bible with the events of every hour, rather than the mere lighting a Sabbath lamp, and forcing all things out of their channel when the season of devotion returns; these are the means of opening the avenues to the youthful heart, and rendering religion, with its great Author, the object, not of aversion or terror, nor only of cold and distant homage, but of mingled reverence and love. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou

walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Mothers, invested as you are with such an influence, often dwell upon your responsibility. With such a power conferred upon you by God, you are responsible to your children themselves. Every time their infant or adult voices repeat that word, "My mother," so sweet, so musical to your heart, they urge their claims upon your best and most devoted attention. As it sounds in your ears it should awaken the deepest emotions of your soul and the most faithful admonitions of your conscience. You are responsible to your husbands. They entrust the education of their children to you. They seem to say, "We will work for their support, and leave the early education of their minds to you. We will hereafter share all the obligations of instruction and the care of their minds and characters with you, but at present, while they are so young, we devolve this duty upon you." You are responsible to the Church of God: for family education is, or ought to be, in the families of the godly, the chief means of conversion. It is a fatal error for Christian parents to look to the ministers of religion for the conversion of their children. And, alas! it is the error of the day. The pulpit is looked to for those benefits which should flow from the parents' chair. Our churches have weighty and righteous claims upon parents, and especially upon mothers. Nor does your responsibility stop here, for society at large looks to you for that beneficial influence which you are capable of exerting. I repeat here the well-known anecdote, which I have given, I believe, in another work. Napoleon once asked Madame Campan what the French nation most needed, in order that her

youth might be properly educated. Her reply was compressed in one word, "Mothers!" And it was a wise reply. Not the French nation only, the world, needs them; Christian, intelligent, well-trained, devoted women, to whom the destinies of the rising generation may be safely entrusted. The woman at whose domestic hearth, and by whose judicious maternal love, a family of industrious, godly, and public-spirited sons, or of modest, kind-hearted, prudent, and pious daughters, is trained for future life, is an ornament of her country, a benefactress to her species, and a blessing to posterity. I again and emphatically say, Mothers, understand, feel, and remember your responsibility.

But hitherto, it may be said, the chapter does not answer to its title as intended for, and addressed to, young mothers. I will therefore now give it a special bearing upon their case. It has been my object, first of all, to set forth the subject of maternal duty and responsibility in its general aspect, apart from its relation to those to whom it is new, that they may see it in its widest and most comprehensive bearing, before they are reminded of its special bearing on their case. This, I am aware, will give the appearance of a repetition in the second part of this chapter of some things that were advanced in the first. But such repetitions are sometimes beneficial. In addition, therefore, to what has been said on maternal duties in general, I shall now submit some other matters for your special consideration.

Too many, it is to be feared, enter upon this momentous business without consideration, and, as might be expected, equally without preparation or qualification. It is indeed a pitiable sight to look into the state

of some families, and behold the hapless condition of the poor children who have the misfortune to be on the hands of a weak, foolish, and incompetent woman. Perhaps the cause may be traced one step further back, and it may be found that they are incompetent, because their mothers were so before them. Thus the mischief perpetuates itself from generation to generation.

In all things it is of importance to begin well. The beginning usually determines the progress and the close. Errors, both in theory and practice, however long and pertinaciously persisted in, may by intelligence, determination, and the blessing of God, be corrected. Reformation would otherwise be hopeless. But how much better and easier is it to avoid faults than to amend them! Many mothers have seen their mistakes when it was too late to correct them. Their children had grown up under the influence of a bad system of domestic government and maternal guidance, and had acquired a fixedness of bad habit which no subsequent wisdom, firmness, severity, or affection, could correct; and the parents had to pour out bitter but unavailing regrets that they had not begun life with those views of their duties with which they were closing it. If a mother begins well, she is likely to continue well, and the same is true if she begin ill. Her conduct towards her first child is likely, of course, to determine her conduct with respect to all the following ones. How momentous is it then, at this stage of her domestic history, to weigh well, and solemnly, and prayerfully, her responsible situation! Indeed it is quite clear that this subject ought not to be driven off by any wife till she becomes a mother. The very prospect ought to lead to a due preparation for the expected new duties; for these com-

mence with the earliest anticipations of sustaining the maternal character. It becomes us to prepare ourselves for any situation into which we have a confident expectation of soon entering. Forethought is given to man for the purpose of meeting with propriety the situation and duties to which we are looking forward. The woman who never studies maternal responsibilities and duties till she is called actually to sustain them, is not very likely to do herself much credit in that very important relationship. Instinct will teach a parent bird, beast, fish, or insect, all that is necessary for the well being of its young; but it is not so with human parents. For study, reflection, forethought, and determination are indispensable for them. Unhappily a young wife, in prospect of giving birth to a child, is in some cases so bowed down with an unnecessary solicitude about her own safety; and in others, so absorbed with the preparations which are made for the physical well-being and the elegant habiliments of her promised baby, as to forget to prepare herself for those more important duties which devolve upon her in relation to the mind, and heart, and conscience, of the child. A mother who wishes to fulfil her duties to her children should take especial pains to educate herself for those momentous functions. She should read, to store her mind with knowledge; she should reflect, observe, and gain useful information from every quarter. Her principles should be fixed, her plans laid, her purposes formed. She must cultivate all the habits and tempers which will fit her to teach and to govern. She must seek to acquire thoughtfulness, careful vigilance, quick observation, and discretion in various forms. Habits of activity, despatch, order, and regularity, are indispensable for her; so is

the exercise of all the good and benevolent feelings. She must unite gentleness with firmness; and attain patience and the entire command of her temper. It is of immense importance also that she should have a correct knowledge of human nature, and the way of dealing with the human heart. And above all things, let her remember that piety is the vivifying spirit of all excellence, and example the most powerful means to enforce it. She should never let the recollection be absent from her mind, that children have both eyes and ears for attention to a mother's conduct. Not content with preparing herself for her important functions beforehand, she should carry on the education of herself simultaneously with that of her children. There are few situations which more imperatively require preparation, and yet few that receive less. Again, we often see in a mother such a solicitude about the health and comfort of her babe; such an engrossing attention to all matters respecting its physical well-being, united with such an exuberant delight in the child, as a child; such a mother's pride and joyousness in her boy, that her mind is diverted by these circumstances from all the serious thoughts and solemn reflections which ought to be awakened by the consideration that a rational, immortal, and fallen creature is committed to her charge, to be trained for both worlds. Thus her attention is absorbed month after month, while all this while her infant's faculties are developing: its judgment, will, affection, and conscience, at least in their capabilities, are opening, but neglected; and its natural bias to evil grows unnoticed and unchecked. The very time when judicious care over the formation of character could be most advantageously exerted is suffered to pass by unim-

proved; passion is allowed to strengthen unrestrained; self-will to attain a resoluteness which stiffens into obstinacy; and the careless mother, who at some time or other intended to begin a system of moral training, (always saying there was time enough yet,) when she does commence, wonders that the subject of her discipline is so difficult to manage. And then she finds that she has so neglected to prepare herself for her duties, that she knows not how to set about them, or what in fact she has to do. An ill-managed child continues growing not only in stature and in strength, but in his wayward disposition and obstinate self-will; the poor mother has no control; and as to the father, he is too much taken up with the cares of business to aid his imperfect helpmate; and thus the scene is exhibited, described by Solomon, of "a child left to himself." Another and another are added to this first-born, and are misgoverned, or not governed at all; and there are soon seen, in rude, disobedient, and ill-natured children, perhaps at length profligate sons, and vain silly daughters, the sad fruits of the want of maternal wisdom! Young mothers, begin well then. Manage that first child with judgment; put forth all your skill, all your affection, all your diligence and devotedness, in training him; and, the habit thus acquired, all will be comparatively easy with the others that follow. It is the novelty of that first child, the new affections which it calls forth, and the new interest that it creates, that are likely without care to throw you off your guard, and divert your attention from the great work of moral training. The first child makes the good or injudicious mother.

And as it is of immense consequence to begin your maternal excellence with the first child, so it is of equal

importance to him, and to every one that is added, as I have already said, to begin early. "Education," as has been observed, "does not begin with the alphabet. It begins with a mother's look; with a father's nod of approbation or sign of reproof; with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand, or a brother's noble act of forbearance: with a handful of flowers in green dells, or on hills or in daisy meadows; with creeping ants, and almost imperceptible emmets; with humming bees, and glass bee-hives; with pleasant walks in shady lanes, and with thoughts directed in affectionate and kindly tones and words to nature, to beauty, to the practice of benevolence, and to the remembrance of Him, who is the fountain of all good." Yes, and before all this can be done, before lessons of instruction can be taught the child from flowers, and insects, and birds, the moral training can commence, a mother's look, her nod of approbation, or sign of reproof. One of the greatest mistakes into which mothers fall is that of supposing the first two or three years of a child's life unimportant as regards his training. The truth is, that in the formation of character, they are the most important of all. It has been truly said, that from the impressions made, the principles implanted, and the habits formed, during these years, the child's character for time and eternity may take its complexion. It is perfectly clear that a child before he can speak is susceptible of moral training. The conscience, or moral sense, may, by a judicious woman, be developed soon after, if not before, the child has spent his first birth-day. So early may he be made to distinguish between what his mother considers right and wrong, between what will please and what will displease her. Why, the brute creatures will do this:

and if they can be taught this, may not very young children? It is admitted that there is more of reason in many brutes than in very young children. Still even very young animals may be trained to know what they may and what they may not do: and so may very young children. We often hear mothers say, their children are too young to be taught obedience. The mother who acts upon the maxim that children may have their own way for a certain number of years, or even months, will find to her cost that that lesson at least will not speedily be forgotten. Moral training may and should precede that which is intellectual. The cultivation of the affections and conscience should be the commencement and foundation of education, and will facilitate every succeeding effort whether of the child or of those who train or teach him.

There is in some women a timidity and a distrust of their own capacity, which paralyse or prevent the endeavours which they could make if they would only believe in their own power. Every woman of good plain understanding can do more than she imagines for the formation of her children's character. What she is deficient in, let her supply by reading; and no mother, however qualified, should neglect this. Every one may learn something from others. Fearful, timid, and anxious mothers, be not afraid! Prayer will bring God's help and God's blessing.

Injudicious indulgence is the most common, as it is the most injurious, danger into which a young mother can fall. Be kind: you ought to be. An unloving, hard-hearted mother is a double libel upon her sex and her relationship. Love is her power, her instrument, her talisman. She can do nothing, worse than nothing,

without it. But then her love must be like that of the Divine Parent, who said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Can you say, "No," to a child, when with winning smiles, or beseeching voice, or weeping eyes, he asks for what it is not good he should receive? Can you take from him that which is likely to be injurious to him, but which it will give him pain to surrender? Can you correct him for his faults when your heart rises up in opposition to your judgment? Can you put him from your arms, at a proper season for so doing, when he clings to your neck and cries to remain. Can you exact obedience in, to him a difficult, but to you, a necessary command? Can you stand out against his tears, resolute in purpose, unyielding in demand, and first conquer your own heart, so stoutly resisting you, in order to conquer his? Or do you allow yourself to be subdued to put an end to the contest, and by soothing his sufferings foster the temper which ought to be eradicated at any pains and any cost? She who cannot answer all this in the affirmative is not fit to be a mother. There must be discipline in a family. A parent must be obeyed. Give up this, and you train your children for evil and not for good. Here again I say, begin early. Put on the soft and easy yoke betimes. The horse is broken in while a colt. Wild beasts are tamed while yet they are young. Both the human species and animals soon grow beyond the power of discipline.

A young mother is apt to devolve too much of the care and early training of her children upon servants. Much of what may be called the drudgery of managing children, must of necessity be committed to them; but a wise woman will have her children with her as

much as possible. Next to mothers, nurse-maids are the most influential class of the community, as regards young children. They and nursery-governesses are to a great extent the educators of the community. They, when carrying the children in their arms, or leading them out for air and exercise, or attending upon them in the nursery, or dressing or undressing them, or however they may be employed for them, are forming them to good or evil habits. If multitudes are spoiled by mothers, multitudes more are spoiled by servants; and some of the latter have undone all the good the former have done. Of what importance is it then that you should be careful as to the persons you admit to your families in this capacity, to whom to entrust your children's minds, and hearts, and consciences; for depend upon it they have the care of them as well as of their bodies !

Need I say to you that all you do in training up your children in the way they should go, should bear directly or indirectly on their eternal welfare? If I seem to advert to this subject with a frequency that looks like tautology, let its tremendous importance, and its too frequent and too great neglect, be my apology. You will not overlook, as I have already remarked, the intellectual training of your children's minds, but their moral and religious education will I hope be with you the chief object of solicitude. Viewing your children as immortal beings destined to eternity, and capable of the enjoyments of heaven, you will labour even from infancy to imbue their minds with religious ideas. It is immortality which rescues from littleness and insignificance all that it appertains to, and hence arises in no inconsiderable degree the exalted honour of a mother.

"She has given birth, by the sovereign ordination of the Almighty, not to a being of a mere momentary existence, whose life will perish like that of the beast of the field, but to an immortal! Her sucking infant, feeble and helpless as it may appear, possesses within its bosom a rational soul, an intellectual power, a spirit which all-devouring time cannot destroy, which can never die, but which will outlive the splendours of the glorious sun, and the burning brilliancy of all the material part of heaven. Throughout the infinite ages of eternity, when all these shall have served their purpose and answered the beneficent end of their creation, and shall have been blotted out from their position in the immense regions of space, the soul of the humblest child will shine and improve before the eternal throne, being filled with holy delight and divine love, and ever active in the praises of its blessed Creator." Mothers, such is your dignity, such your exalted honour. Feel and value your rich distinction in being called to educate the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and to prepare the holy family who are to dwell in those many mansions of his Father's house which the Lord Jesus is gone to prepare. Give yourselves up to this glorious work. But be judicious in all you do, lest you produce prejudice against true religion, instead of prepossession in its favour. Let your warmest affection, your greatest cheerfulness, your most engaging smiles, be put on when you teach religion to your children. Approach as nearly as possible to a seraph form. Be you religion in all its beauty, loveliness, sanctity, and ineffable sweetness. Let them see it in your character as well as hear it from your lips. And especially be careful not to enforce as a task, what should be proposed as an object of hope, and

a source of delight. Let them see in you, that piety, if in one respect it is a strait and narrow path, is in another, a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Do not inflict upon them as a punishment for offences, learning Scripture or hymns; and thus convert religion, which is the foretaste of heaven, into a penance which shall be to them like being tormented before their time. Especially do not make the Sabbath a day of gloom instead of gladness, by such an accumulation of services as shall cause the day of rest to be physically more irksome than the common labours of the week.

And can it be necessary, after what I have said in a former part of this chapter, to admonish you again to pray for and with your children? How have a mother's prayers been blessed to her children! John Randolph, a distinguished American statesman, who had been much exposed to the seductions of infidelity in the society into which he had been thrown by his position, thus accounted to a gentleman with whom he was conversing, for his preservation: "I believe I should have been swept away by the flood of French infidelity, if it had not been for one thing, the remembrance of the time, when my sainted mother used to make me kneel by her side, taking my little hands folded in hers, and caused me to repeat the Lord's Prayer."

"On the east of Long Island, in one of the most secluded spots in America, more than thirty years ago, a mother, whose rare intellectual and moral endowments were known to but few, made this simple record: 'This morning I rose very early to pray for my children; and especially that my sons may be ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ.' "A number of years after, a friend who was present, thus describes that mother's dying

hour: 'Owing to extreme weakness, her mind wandered, and her conversation was broken; but as she entered the valley of the shadow of death, her soul lighted up and gilded its darkness. She made a feeling and most appropriate prayer, and told her husband that her views and anticipations had been such, that she could scarcely sustain them; and that if they had been increased, she should have been overwhelmed; that her Saviour had blessed her with constant peace, and that through all her sickness, she had never prayed for life. She dedicated her five sons to God as ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ, and said that her greatest desire was that her children might be trained up for God. 'She spoke with joy of the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and of the glorious day now ushering in. She attempted to speak to her children, but was so exhausted, and their cries and sobs were such, that she could say but little. Her husband then made a prayer, in which he gave her back to God, and dedicated all they held in common, to him. She then fell into a sweet sleep, from which she awoke in heaven.' "The prayers of this mother have been answered. All her eight children have been 'trained up for God.' Her five sons are all 'ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ:' and the late Rev. George Beecher is the first of her offspring whom she has welcomed to heaven." And one of her daughters is the lady already alluded to in this discourse, who has obtained a world-wide fame by her pathetic story against slavery. In that lady and her work, as well as in her able and learned brothers, we see the fruit of a mother's prayers.

Take with you the following maxims, as summing up all that has been said.

Though a child's character is not entirely created by the circumstances in which he is placed, especially as regards his mother, it is powerfully influenced by them.

Education is designed to form character, and not merely to communicate instruction. A king of Sparta, when asked what it was in which youth ought principally to be instructed, replied, "In that which they have most need to practise when men."

Obedience is the first thing a mother has to teach; first both in order and time, and the foundation of all the rest. Obedience must first be taught as a habit, and soon after inculcated as a duty.

A mother should assiduously cultivate the spirit of curiosity in a child, and instead of always calling him to learn, should prompt his desires to be informed.

Young children must be sometimes contradicted in their wishes, but never merely for the purpose of teaching them submission by taking from them something they are pleased with.

Habits of employment and a love of useful employment, should be taught to children: they are not so mischievous for the mere love of mischief, as they are supposed to be. If they destroy articles, it is sometimes for the purpose of investigation, and oftener still for want of proper employment, which ought to be furnished to them. In very early childhood a love of industry and honest independence may be instilled into a child, by teaching him that it is honourable to be usefully employed. One little child may feel the pleasure and practise the duty of benevolence, by doing something for the comfort of a tender babe still more helpless than itself.

It is of the first importance for a mother to establish

in the mind of her child an entire confidence in herself; in her wisdom, kindness, and truth, as well as a sense of her irresistible authority.

Truth, sincerity, candour, and ingenuousness are cardinal virtues in children. Simplicity is the beauty of a child's character; and he should be taught from the beginning to act upon principle, and not for the sake of being well thought of or rewarded.

Domestic affections should be most assiduously cultivated. When the second baby is born, the first child should, if old enough to understand the matter, be congratulated, and taught to regard it as an acquisition by which his happiness is to be increased, and in which he is to take an interest in conjunction with his parents. The child who is taught affectionate obedience to his parents, and justice and kindness towards his little equals round the domestic hearth, is being trained to fill with propriety the stations and relations of future life.

The babe grows into the child; the child into the youth; the youth into the man; and the man into the immortal; and that immortal will be an heir of glory or a child of perdition. Let this be remembered from the beginning and ever acted upon.

Discipline in a family is what the public administration of justice is to a state; where it is wanting, there may be very good laws, but they will remain a dead letter, and the reign of crime and confusion be the certain consequence.

Religion should not be regarded as one science among many, the inculcation of which is a part of good education, but it must be the vital principle diffusing itself through all instruction, all rules, all authority, all

discipline, and all example. At what age is it proper, it may be asked, to begin teaching children religion? Their father and mother are, if true and consistent Christians, religion embodied; and as soon as they begin to know their parents they begin to know something about religion. A very young child is quite aware that his parents speak to One whom they do not see, and inquiring thoughts are awakened in his mind, before he can express them in words.*

And now, to sum up all, consider a mother's charge, an immortal creature: a mother's duty, to train him up for God, heaven and eternity: a mother's dignity, to educate the family of the Almighty Creator of the universe: a mother's difficulty, to raise a fallen sinful creature to holiness and virtue: a mother's encouragement, the promise of Divine grace to assist her in her momentous duties: a mother's relief, to bear the burden of her cares to God in prayer: and a mother's hope, to meet her child in glory everlasting, and spend eternal ages of delight with him before the throne of God and the Lamb.

But are mothers only to engage in this work of educating their children for God? No. Fathers, I speak to you, for the Bible speaks to you: "Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I have addressed this chapter to your wives, because on them first devolves the duty of training the infant mind, and preparing the children for your hands. Not that they will ever, or should ever, give up their assiduities

* Some of these maxims are taken from "The Young Mother, or Affectionate Advice to an Unmarried Daughter," by Mrs Copley. Published by the Tract Society.

or withdraw their influence. A mother's power is perhaps as great when judiciously exerted over the adult, as over the infant child. But you, when the children are growing up, must join your solicitude and labours with hers. They are your children as well as hers. God will require their souls at your hands as well as hers. Are you exercising your authority, giving your instructions, pouring out your prayers, affording your example, for the salvation of your children? Is it your wish, your ambition, your endeavour, your supplication, that they may be religious men or only rich ones? Are you pouring your influence into the same channel as your holy wife? Are you helping or hindering her in her pious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of your joint offspring? Happy, happy couple, where there is sympathy of feeling and similarity of sentiment in the most momentous concern that can engage the attention of man, of angels, or of God, religion: where the husband and the wife are of one mind and one heart, not only in reference to themselves, but in regard also to their children, and both are engaged in training them up for everlasting glory! I can liken such a couple, in their benevolent efforts for their children's welfare, only to the two angels who were sent down from heaven to the rescue of Lot, and who with holy and benevolent violence took him by the hand to pluck him from the burning city, and conducted him to the place of safety prepared by the mercy of Almighty God.

After this chapter was composed and partly printed, I received the following letter:*—

* This sentence will be explained by the Editor's note at the commencement.

"Dear Mr James,

In your next Sermon to Young Women, will you kindly give some advice to common-place Mothers; who, not gifted with extraordinary affection, or extraordinary patience, are apt to be sadly worried with the incessant and multifarious claims of a large little family; especially where a limited income imposes unremitting toil to arrange for ordinary domestic comfort; and the numerous inmates of a small house almost preclude the refreshment of solitary closet intercourse with that Heavenly Father who rewardeth openly. As a class, we would gladly be instructed how to avoid, or at least to surmount, the impatience and irritation so frequently engendered by the perplexities of the nursery and the school room; the hasty speech, the angry action, which must be not only a hindrance to maternal influence, but perhaps even a hindrance to the efficacy of a mother's prayers.

Excuse the liberty I take in thus writing to you, and with many thanks for your past valuable hints,

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

A Common-place Mother."

This letter claims and awakens my tenderest sympathy for the class of mothers to whom it refers; I mean women without the advantages of wealth, the accommodations of a nursery, and the help of servants, to lighten the load of maternal cares, and to assist in the performance of maternal duties: women who must always be in the midst of the perpetually recurring trials of temper to which, in such circumstances, a numerous family of young children exposes them; and who may fancy themselves, as to intellectual and other qualifications, only "Common-place Mothers." Let such women not despond as if they were but slenderly fitted for their duties. The writer of this letter gives full evidence that she is not disqualified for a mother's functions, so far as mental ability is concerned: but perhaps she, and others in her situation, may have something yet to learn and acquire as to temper and manner. It is evident she is

in danger in these respects. The waywardness and freaks of unamiable disposition in her children produce petulance and irritability, and lead perhaps too often on her part to unseemly anger. A scold, slap, or shake, sometimes takes the place of mild but firm expostulation, and calm correction. To her, and to all in her situation, I say, what you need, and what you must put forth all your constant and determined effort, and wrestling supplication with God, to obtain, is the complete subjugation of your temper. You must bring this under control. You must acquire forbearance, patience, and calm serenity. It will cost you much trouble and much prayer to attain it; but God's grace will be sufficient for you. I do not, of course, counsel you to contract that spirit of apathetic, easy indifference which lets children take their own course, and for the sake of a little ease throws up the reins of discipline. Still a mother must often have eyes and not see; ears, and not hear. A fussing, fidgetty notice of every little thing that goes wrong in the temper of all the children, will keep her in perpetual misery. To all then who are in the situation of "The Common-place Mother," I again and again, with all possible emphasis, say, subdue your irritability, and acquire a calm, patient, forbearing, loving, and serene mind. God will help you if you seek it. You must not think such a frame of mind unattainable, nor allow your provocations and temptations to be an apology for your little sallies of bad temper.

The misfortune perhaps in the case of such mothers, is that they did not begin well. The first child was not well managed. Bad habits crept on, and now, with the family increased, it is difficult to break them. I have known even large, very large families, where, though

there were few domestic accommodations, by good temper, patience, and kindness, mixed with firmness, on the part of the mother, aided by a wise, kind, firm father, the children were all well-managed, and the parents happy.

It would greatly comfort, help, and encourage such mothers, if they attended the meetings of Mothers' Societies, where such institutions are formed.

As regards what is said about the opportunity for prayer, I can hardly admit a crowded house to be an excuse for the neglect of this. Every mother has at her command her own chamber, to which, as to a little sanctuary, when the infant voices are hushed in sleep, she can repair and pour out her heart to God for her children, and perhaps breathe over some of them, slumbering on the bed at which she kneels, a mother's prayers. Besides, how much of prayer, silent and ejaculatory, yet sincere, fervent, and believing, may be presented to God, without the formalities of devotion, or the retirement of the closet!

I again say, let no mother despair of herself because she does not possess high intellectual qualifications: the more of these she has of course the better, but a temper under control, a patient, loving, forbearing disposition, mild firmness, a gentle, but constant maintenance of parental authority, a judicious administration of rewards and correction, will enable any woman to fill her place with efficiency, though she may think herself to be "A Common-place Mother."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF A GOOD WIFE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. PROVERBS xxxi, 10.

IF any one desires a book which shall combine grandeur of subject with beauty of expression; the sublimest theology with the soundest morality; the widest variety of topic with an obvious unity of design; the most ancient history with the most fascinating poetry; the profoundest philosophy with the plainest maxims of human conduct; pathetic narratives with picturesque descriptions of character; in short, a book which shall as truly gratify the taste by the elegance of its composition, as it shall sanctify the heart by the purity of its doctrines; and thus, while it opens the glories of heaven and prepares the soul for possessing and enjoying them, shall furnish a source of never failing pleasure upon earth; I say if such a book be sought, it can be found in the Bible, and only in the Bible, and that precious volume more than answers the description.

And where in all the range of inspired or uninspired literature can be found a delineation of female excellence, I will not say equal to, but worthy to be compared with, that which forms the subject of the present chapter?

We have in it a picture of which it is difficult to say which is the most striking, the correctness of the drawing or the richness of the colouring. Both display a master's hand, and though delineated three thousand years ago, it is still true to nature; and when we have removed some of the effects of time, retouched some lines that have been clouded and obscured by the lapse of years, and given a few explanations, it is impossible to look at it without admiration and delight. It adds to the interest to know that it is the production of a female artist. It is the description of a good wife, drawn by the hand of a mother, to guide her son in the selection of a companion for life. They are "the words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him." Who this king was is a matter of uncertainty. He was not, as some have supposed, Solomon. The original Hebrew has many Chaldaisms, which are found in no other part of the book of Proverbs, and afford a cogent argument that it was written by another hand, and perhaps after the captivity. The whole passage is composed with art, being a kind of poem containing twenty-two verses respectively beginning, like some of the Psalms, with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their order of succession. Whoever Lemuel might have been, he had the privilege of a most eminent mother. "The admonitory verses with which the chapter commences, composed by this distinguished woman for her son when in the flower of youth and high expectation, are an inimitable production, as well in respect to their actual materials, as the delicacy with which they are selected. Instead of attempting to lay down rules concerning matters of state and political government, the illustrious writer confines herself, with

the nicest and most becoming art, to a recommendation of the gentler virtues of temperance, benevolence, and mercy; and to a minute and unparalleled delineation of the female character which might bid fairest to promote the happiness of her son in connubial life." What a pattern of maternal excellence was this mother of the king! We may well imagine that in this inimitable portrait she drew her own likeness. What sons we should see, if all were blessed with such mothers as she was!

In taking up this delineation, I shall first consider the inquiry which introduces it. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." This interrogation implies the rarity and the worth of the object sought. The question might have been more forcible in those times than in ours, for such a blessing was no doubt more scarce than it is now. True it is, the picture is so admirable, that even now a perfect resemblance is not to be found everywhere. Yet, if extraordinary excellence is not often met with, happily that which is far above mediocrity is by no means rare. And why should there not be in every female bosom an intense desire to rise to a perfect conformity to this beautiful pattern? How much more to be valued by her happy possessor is this, than all the jewels with which so many women are fond of being decked, or than the largest and the purest diamond in the mines of the east!

I proceed now to consider this exquisite delineation of "the virtuous woman." But really I feel as if to touch it were to spoil it, and as though comments were almost like painting the tulip, perfuming the rose, or attempting to add brilliancy to the sun. Instead

of following the order of the verses, and adopting the regular expository method, I shall dislocate the verses and place them under separate heads and titles. The authoress reserves piety for the climax or culminating point of her description, and winds up the whole thus, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised." I shall make this our starting point. It is set forth in the verse just quoted, and there the essence of true religion is comprised in that phrase, "The fear of the Lord:" which means the cultivation and exercise of all right and holy dispositions towards God. Yes, this is religion, to have the heart right towards God. And we hold that this is not merely the gilded ornament that towers upwards to heaven, and crowns and beautifies the building at the apex, though it is this; but it is more than this, for it is the base of the whole structure, and supports the noble pyramid of varied excellences. It is this which makes them strong and stable, and ensures at once their proportions and their perpetuity. True piety, instead of setting aside a single female excellence, clothes all such with a Divine sanction; harmonises the demands of God with the claims of man; converts the ordinary duties of domestic life into a means of preparation for that glorious world where the social ties no longer exist; and softens the cares, anxieties, and sorrows, with which woman's lot in this world is but too often sadly oppressed. Whatever else a woman may be, without this she is lamentably deficient. "Favour," or as the word signifies, gracefulness, "is deceitful and beauty is vain." The face of a beautiful woman ought to be an index of the mind; and when all is fair without, as it is said of the king's daughter

in the Psalm, all should be glorious within. Never do an ill-furnished mind and an ill-favoured heart appear more revolting than when seen united, but in contrast, with personal attractions. And yet how often do elegance of manners, and loveliness of person, conceal dispositions which are in perfect opposition to them, and bitterly disappoint the man who has been captivated by them, and who in his choice of a wife has been led by no other considerations than mere personal charms!

"Let beauty have its due praise, and suppose what you will of it; suppose all that the poets say of it be true: still the text tells you it is vain, it is in its nature transient, fleeting, perishing: it is the flower of the spring which must fade in autumn; and when the blossom falls, if no fruit succeeds, of what value, I pray, is the tree? The grave is already opening for the most elegant person that moves, and the worms are waiting to feed on the fairest face that is beholden." But religion is an excellence and a beauty which time cannot corrode, nor old age wrinkle, nor disease spoil, nor death destroy; but which after living and thriving amidst the decay of all other things in this world, will flourish in the next in the vigour of immortal youth.

We next note her conjugal excellence. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life." Confidence between man and wife is the basis of domestic happiness. There cannot possibly be happiness where this is wanting. Suspicion and jealousy must drive felicity out of doors. In regard to the "virtuous woman," her husband trusts her chastity. Her fidelity is as inviolable as the covenant of the Most High, and her purity unsullied as

the light of heaven. What a torment is jealousy in the bosom of husband or wife! wormwood and gall are sweet to it. He trusts her fidelity in the management of his affairs, and knows that all his domestic interests are safe in her hands. With such a manager at home, he can go without anxiety to his daily business, travel to distant places, or remain, when necessary, away from home for ever so long a time. He shall have "no need of spoil;" shall have no necessity through an improvident and unthrifty wife, for spoiling others of their property. "He need not," says Matthew Henry, "be griping and scraping abroad, as those must be, whose wives are proud and wasteful at home." She manages his affairs so that he is always before-hand, and has such plenty of his own that he is in no temptation to prey upon his neighbours. He thinks himself so happy in her that he envies not those who have most of the wealth of this world: he needs it not, he has enough in having such a wife. Happy the couple that have such satisfaction as this in each other! It is too well known to be denied, that if many husbands make their wives wretched by their unkindness, many wives make their husbands poor by unthriftiness. Many a man has been tempted to cheat his creditors through the improvidence, bad management, and extravagance of his wife. The "virtuous woman" will study to do her husband good, and to avoid doing him evil, all the days of her life. She will be inventive, ingenious, and laborious to promote his comfort, his health, and his interest; will smooth by her sweet words his brow, when wrinkled with care; hush the sigh that misfortune extorts from his bosom; will answer with gentleness the sharp words that in moments of irritation drop from his lips, and will do all this, not

by fits and starts in genial moods, but continually. But this is not all; for on looking onward in the chapter we find another reference to her conduct and influence as a wife. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." By the gates are meant the place of magisterial assembly and business, which in ancient times was in apartments over the gates of the city. In these public convocations a good wife will make her husband known, and add to his public reputation in various ways. Her prudent conduct in her domestic arrangements will enable him to leave home with confidence to attend to public business. She does not engross his company so as to prevent his becoming a public benefactor and blessing. By the happiness which she imparts to him at their own fireside she sends him abroad, not with a downcast look, as if he had left a heavy trouble at home, or carried it everywhere with him; but with a cheerful countenance, as though he had just come from the scene and seat of his chief earthly bliss. By her proper care of his personal appearance, in the elegance and neatness of his apparel, (which in ancient times was the work of her hands;) and especially by the force of her holy example sustaining and encouraging his excellence, she raises the honour and increases the respect of her husband. He is better known and more esteemed as the husband of such a wife. Can a woman rise to higher honour than to be so excellent and estimable as to augment the public respectability of her husband? Still, let husbands take care that they do not shine only in borrowed splendour, and stand indebted for all their esteem to their wives. Let them so act, and be such men, that the honour they receive on account of their wives shall be only an

addition to the greater honour that belongs to themselves. It is to the comfort and glory of a man to be better known and more respected on account of his wife; but it is to his discredit to be known and respected only by and for his wife. It is a poor mean affair for a man to go through society with no higher qualification than his wife's excellence. Such a woman must feel herself, though in one sense exalted, in another degraded, by being the wife of a man who has no public honour, but such as he derives from her. It must bring misery when the husband finds himself ever totally eclipsed by his wife: except indeed he be too stupid to feel it. Alas for the wife of such a man! Let this induce care and caution in the formation of the marriage union. Unequal matches are not often happy ones.

Observe now her industry as a woman. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." This is an allusion to the customs of the times, and is a description of her personal habits of manual labour and energetic employment. All textures of wool and flax, cotton and silk, were, before the invention of machinery, woven out of thread and yarn, spun by hand with a distaff and spindle. Nor was this occupation confined exclusively to the labouring classes: for queens, princesses, and peeresses disdained not to be thus employed, amidst the more courtly occupations of their rank. It is well worthy of attention, that out of the twenty-two verses of this elegant poem, eleven are taken up in setting forth the virtue and practice of the matron's industry, in its various relations and duties. And her industry is represented as eminently utilitarian. Indo-

lence is sometimes thought and said to be one of the failings to which women are exposed; especially in single, and more frequently in high, life. It is censurable even there; how much more in the state of matrimony! And those who give themselves up to it as maidens, are in imminent peril of carrying the habit forward into the state of the wife, the mother, and the mistress. An indolent woman at the head of the domestic economy must throw all into confusion. It is neither asked nor expected that her energies should be expended on works which belong to servants; but an active female, even with servants at command, may always find something to do without stepping out of her proper place. The mistress of an establishment, especially if she be also a wife and a mother, can never plead want of occupation as an excuse for personal laziness. What a sad example does such a woman set to her servants and her children! No vice is more contagious than this, nor is any example more likely to be imitated by those around.

We next notice her thriftiness as a wife and female head of a family. "She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard." "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant." "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night."* From these verses it is apparent that in early

* It may be doubted whether in the state of society to which this description belongs there were any household stuffs, but such as were thus produced in families, and the demand having no other source of supply stimulated domestic production to an extent of which we can hardly have any adequate conception. Many families would produce much more than they could consume, and as there was always a demand and a profitable remuneration for such products, a

times women were extensively employed even in buying and selling such matters as suited their sex; and without withdrawing their attention from other duties, aided their husbands to increase the wealth and comforts of their families. This manufacturing in the house, this traffic with the merchants, this buying a piece of ground and planting a vineyard, sound hardly feminine in our ears; but they give us an insight into those times, and show how little the tyranny of man over woman, which afterwards, as time rolled on, prevailed in eastern countries, had yet been practised. Woman is here seen as man's companion, counsellor and helper, even to the making provision for the support of the family. Modern customs render this to a considerable extent unnecessary. Woman's place ordinarily is the parlour and the nursery rather than the shop. Buying and selling are the business of the husband, and taking care of the family that of the wife; and the less, as a general rule, the latter has to do with the former, the better. It is an indelible reproach to any man to live in idleness upon the labours of his wife, and leave her to take care of their children also. A month's labour at the treadmill, or a month's penance upon bread and water, would be a suitable regimen for such drones. Yet

thrifty housewife would be industrious herself, and keep all her servants at work, especially at those articles, such as the fine linen and girdles, which were most in demand. The travelling merchants called at the homes of the people, bought up their articles, and then re-sold them. At the present day we see offered for sale in eastern towns, either at first or second-hand, the outer garments, spun and woven by the Arab females in their tents, the admired carpets made by the women of Persia, and even the rich embroideries and other elegant productions of the needle which are prepared by the town ladies in their harems. *Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations"* on this chapter.

necessity dispenses with ordinary laws; and where there are no children to be provided for, or where their comfort and education can be attended to also, it is by no means an unseemly spectacle to witness a clever and devoted woman occasionally at the side of her husband in the scenes of his trade. This applies, of course only to small concerns, for in large ones there is no need of it. No wife will feel herself degraded by such occupations. The grateful and affectionate smile of her husband, and the consciousness that she is lightening his cares and aiding him to support his family, will be an ample reward for her labour.*

We notice next her judgment and skill in her domestic arrangements. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." "Her candle goeth not out by night." "She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her food from afar." "She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet;" or, as it should be rendered, "in double garments."

How many points there are here worthy of notice and imitation. She knows the value of time and redeems

* It is, however, a great unhappiness for the labouring classes of this and other manufacturing towns, that married women, who are not only wives but mothers, are so extensively employed in our manufactories. In some cases it may be necessary, and even beneficial; but as a general practice it is fraught with much discomfort to the family. And in order to render it unnecessary, let the husband be more industrious, more sober, more temperate in all things: and forego the earnings of his wife at the manufactory, that she may be looking after her children, and providing him with a clean, comfortable, and well-ordered home. This would take away from him one temptation to frequent the ale-house.

it, and makes the day as long as she can by early rising. Nothing wastes time more than unnecessary slumber. Sleep is a temporary death, and no more of it should be taken than prepares for a healthy resurrection in the morning. Even the rising of our Lord from the grave took place very early in the morning, as if among the minor lessons he would teach us by the very circumstances of that wondrous and glorious event, one is that our own morning figure of the resurrection in rising from our bed should take place early. A slothful woman, who wastes the precious hours of prime in bed, is a sad example to her family. How can she teach the valuable habit of early rising to her children and servants; or how can she "look well to the ways of her household, and give meat to her maidens," by setting in order her household affairs, if she leave not her downy pillow till the day is far spent. And then it is said of the good wife, "Her candle goeth not out by night." When the days are short and the nights long, she takes no advantage of this for the indulgence of sloth. Though early up to lengthen the day at that end, she is not in haste to retire to rest, and so shorten it at the other. Each hour has its work, and the work of the hour is done in the hour. The ways of her household are the constant matter of oversight and inspection, and such is the fruit of her good management, that when winter comes, her servants and children need not fear frost or snow, for they are protected from the cold with both inside and outside garments. How interesting a scene is it on a bleak cheerless day, when the east wind is piercing, and the sleet is driving before it, to see a large family, through the activity of an industrious and kind mother and mistress, all warmly clad. In a complete

sense "looking well to the ways of her household," must include not only good housewifery, but a proper attention to their moral habits, their religious instruction, their attendance on the means of grace, giving them time for secret prayer, and reading God's Word, the daily ordinance of family worship, the careful observance of the sabbath, anxious watchfulness over their manners, habits, and connections; in short, considering servants, not as beasts of burden, not as mere mercenaries, but as a solemn and responsible trust for God and eternity. Who can have the claim to the title of a virtuous woman who does not feel this weight of family responsibility?* And what a responsibility! Let every mistress read it, tremble and pray. I most urgently enjoin all the acquirements of good and clever housewifery, of frugality without stinginess, plenty without profusion, attention without slavery, order without fastidiousness, dispatch without hurry, and elegance without extravagance. "This bear in mind," said an accomplished writer, in giving his advice to his son, when he is directing him as to the choice of a wife, "that if she is not frugal, if she is not what is called a good manager, if she does not pique herself on her knowledge of family affairs, and laying out her money to the best advantage; let her be ever so sweetly tempered, gracefully made, or elegantly accomplished, she is no wife for a tradesman; and all these amiable talents will but open just so many ways to ruin. In short, remember your mother, who was so exquisitely versed in this art, that her dress, her table, and every other particular, appeared rather splendid than otherwise; and yet good housewifery was the foundation of all; and her bills, to

* Bridges.

my certain knowledge, were a fourth less than most of her neighbours, who had hardly cleanliness to boast, in return for their awkward liberality." This is all true, and all good as far as it goes. But then it is not enough, for to this must be added all that moral and religious oversight and care which Mr. Bridges in the above quotation has so justly included in it.

I may now introduce her conduct as a mother. "Her children arise up and call her blessed." Happy the children of such a mother, who receive the lessons of wisdom taught them by her lips, as well as by the example of piety, prudence, and sobriety which she sets them in her conduct. With their character formed under the plastic influence of her own, and the consciousness how much they owe to her influence, they rise up around her with feelings of gratitude and veneration; when surrounded with families of their own, they teach her grandchildren to reverence her; and when she has descended to the tomb, they pour those blessings over her grave which they had during her life been accustomed to offer round her chair, or in their evening prayer for her welfare. Let it be the holy and honourable ambition of every mother to be crowned with the blessings of her children, which she that is foolish or sinful never can be. Let every mother seriously ponder what she would really wish her daughters to be; what by general consent they would be praised for being, and that let her be herself. The mother should be as perfect a model as possible for her daughters to imitate. In the last chapter I gave directions to young mothers in reference to the early training of their children; let me now give a few hints to those whose children are rising up around them, or have become young men and

women. I say then, be much at home yourselves, and that is the way, if your temper, spirit, and conduct be loving and agreeable, to keep them at home. Make them fond of your society, by causing them to feel that you are fond of theirs. Throw an air of cheerfulness over the circle. A mother's smile is the sunshine of the domestic group, in which all delight to bask. Be happy yourselves, and you will then make your children happy around you. And yet let it not be a cheerfulness that degenerates into levity. Nothing can be more unseemly than a frivolous mother, indulging in undignified mirth, or frothy, gossiping, or slanderous discourse, in the midst of grown-up sons and daughters. To be called a "rattle" is no commendation of a mother. Of all subjects on which a discreet mother will never joke with her children, love and courtship will be the last. A wise and good woman will avoid all trifling with matters of such delicacy and importance. To her sons she will exhibit in herself the model after which she would wish them to choose a wife; and to her daughters, the pattern she would wish them to copy, should they ever become wives and mothers themselves. There should be a high and dignified bearing, softened by the tenderest affection; and a kindness and affability uncorrupted by a low familiarity. Her authority should insure the prompt obedience of her children, whatever be their age; as her wisdom should attract their confidence, and her love their gratitude and affection. She must be thus their companion, counsellor, and comforter, and by the frankness of her own disposition encourage theirs. They must be so treated as to be made to feel that they have no momentous secrets they could wish to conceal from her. And especially should she exhibit to

them all the holiness, meekness, consistency, beauty and attractiveness of true religion; the sanctifying, humbling, spiritualising power of genuine godliness in prosperity, and all its Divine support and heavenly consolation in adversity, that they may be won by her example to piety, and thus rise up not only on earth, and in time, but in heaven, and through all eternity, to call her blessed.

She is not destitute of taste and elegance. "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." Though not addicted to pride in dress and vanity in ornaments, she maintains her rank and station in society by their external and conventional signs. Her wardrobe and her furniture are in keeping with her circumstances, her virtues, and her industry. And it is right that they should be so. Religion, my female friends, is not at war with elegance and good taste. It is itself the "beauty of holiness," and the richest and purest moral taste. Neither despise nor idolize these matters. Be neither a sloven nor a dressed doll; neither the slave nor the despiser of fashion: neither excite disgust by your want of attention to little matters of order, becomingness and ornament, nor court admiration by splendour and expensiveness. Be consistent with your station in all respects. Affect not the pride of meanness any more than that of magnificence. As to the elegant occupations for leisure hours of modern times, I refer to what in former chapters I have said on the subject of accomplishments.

Note her prudence in speech. "She openeth her mouth in wisdom." She thinks before she speaks; and therefore neither introduces a bad subject, nor disgraces a good one by an improper manner of discoursing upon it. She has too just a sense of the value of the gift

of speech, and too accurate an idea of the power of words for good or for evil, to employ them in idle gossip, petty scandal, or slanderous backbiting. She is neither too taciturn, knowing that speech is given to be employed; nor too talkative, equally knowing that "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." The apostle James says: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." This, perhaps, is still more true of a woman, inasmuch as she is thought to have a greater propensity to loquacity. The gift of speech is never more adorned than when employed in the soft and gentle tones of woman's voice uttering the words of wisdom and kindness: never more dissonant and repulsive than when her tongue is voluble in folly or falsehood, malice or passion. Have we not all known husbands, a large portion of whose time has been employed in explaining the mistakes, correcting the follies, healing the feuds, and repairing the mischiefs, of wives who opened their mouths without wisdom? While on the other hand, has not many an Abigail, by her discreet and timely interposition and wise address, averted the storm that was gathering over the family from the churlish language of Nabal, her husband? Blessed is the woman who knows how to charm to repose the troubled thoughts of an angry or a vexed husband: who can discern when to be silent and when to speak: and how by the sweet tones of her voice to lull his agitated mind, and drive the evil spirit out of his breast. Ah! it is at home that this wisdom of speech is most wanted. What stormy scenes sometimes arise from the absence of it, driving peace from the family and filling it with harsh discord and fearful strife!

Is benevolence no part of the spirit and conduct

of the virtuous woman? Let the text reply. "In her tongue is the law of kindness. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." Her kindness begins with thoughts, goes on to words, and ends in works. In her heart, it is as a principle of charity; upon her tongue, as a law to dictate gentle, and soothing, and pleasing words. She speaks, and her expressions are as the droppings of the honey-comb, or the falling of the dew. But her mercy is in her hand as well as in her heart and upon her lips. She does not merely say to the hungry and shivering, "Be ye warmed and be ye filled," but she gives them wherewith to satisfy their hunger and clothe their limbs. And her kindliness of disposition is the golden thread which runs through all her life, and binds up all her actions, not only into a womanly, but saintly, benevolence. Her spindle and distaff so industriously employed, are worked not for herself alone, but for the poor and needy. She is not so taken up with those within the circle of her family as to forget those that are without. Her benevolence is like a spring, which not only refreshes and fertilises the spot where it gushes up and makes all verdant round its margin, but flows onward to carry its benefits to those at a distance. She adorns herself with "silk and purple," and makes "coverings of tapestry" for her own habitation, and clothes her household; but then also, like Dorcas, she makes garments for the poor. How beautifully does this feature of kindness come into the portrait; how does this diamond of mercy sparkle amidst the other jewels of this charming character! What a blank would the absence of it have made! How should we have turned away, not with admiration, but with sadness,

from this industry, frugality, conjugal affection, good housewifery, maternal excellency, prudence, and elegance, if all these virtues had been exhibited in the iron setting of selfishness, instead of the gold of mercy! If this woman, the pattern of all household virtues, had been presented to us as so swallowed up in her cares for her own well-provided household as to do nothing for the starving and naked families around her, a dark shadow would have fallen on her otherwise bright character, and its luminousness would have passed at once if not into total, yet into partial eclipse. But it is not so. Mercy, like a mid-day sun, rises upon the scene, and sheds its lustre upon all. Christian women, you must be the brightest patterns of kindness and mercy which our selfish world contains, and add to temperance, patience, and godliness, Christian kindness and charity.

Such a character cannot be unnoticed or unacknowledged; nor can such excellence pass through the world without admiration and commendation; and I now therefore note the honour and esteem with which she is treated. "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." "Her husband also, and he praiseth her." "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised." "Give her of the fruits of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." She seeks not human applause, and therefore acts no theatrical part; nor, for the sake of praise, affects display. Content with the love and esteem of her husband, the veneration and affection of her children, and the respect of her friends, she is not anxious to obtrude herself upon public attention, to

shine in brilliant circles, or to have even her excellence made the subject of general commendation. Still, unsought praise will be given her. Spontaneous tributes and free-will offerings of honour and respect will be paid her. Her husband will be the first to perceive, and the foremost to acknowledge, her excellence. If a grateful man, he will make her sensible of his just appreciation of her excellences, not by mere fondling and caresses, but by respect for her judgment and character; by commending her to her children, and bidding them follow her example. Cases do sometimes occur of men so inferior to their wives, and so conscious of that inferiority, as to be jealous of their ascendency in the family, and envious of the talents and virtues they cannot imitate. A husband blessed with such a woman as is described in this chapter, should not be backward on suitable occasions to let others know the estimate he forms of her character. True it is that a wise man will not be ever talking of his wife's excellences; but he will, at proper seasons, feel a pride and a pleasure in exalting her in public estimation, and the public will not fail to give her the fruit of her doings. "Let every one," says Bishop Patrick, "extol her virtue. Let her not want the just commendation of her pious labours. But while some are magnified for the nobleness of the stock from whence they sprang; others for their fortune; others for their beauty; others for other things; let the good deeds which she herself hath done be publicly praised in the greatest assemblies, where, if all men shall be silent, her own works will declare her excellent works." And to use the poetic language of another prelate (Bishop Horne), "The crown which her own hands have thus formed shall be placed upon

her head as it were by general consent, even in this life; and her good deeds celebrated in public assemblies, shall diffuse an odour grateful as the smell of Eden, or as the cloud of frankincense ascending from the holy altar. When her task is ended, the answer of a good conscience, and the blessings of all around, sweeter than the sweetest music, shall chant her to her repose, till awakened on the great morning of the world, descending angels shall introduce this daughter of Jerusalem into the joy of her Lord."

Such then is the character of the virtuous woman, as delineated by the mother of King Lemuel. By expanding the miniature as it was drawn by the pen of inspiration into a large and full-length picture, I have perhaps done injustice to the subject. If so, let those who are of this opinion, perpetually and closely study the original as it is found in the book of Proverbs. "There," says Matthew Henry, in his quaint style, "is shut up this looking glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by; and if they do so, their adorning will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

If, however, a wife devoid of all that constitutes her real excellence, will run counter to this beautiful picture, if instead of being the glory of her husband, she will seek to rival him, and will either attempt to be in the domestic firmament the greater light to rule the day, or to throw into eclipse him before whom she should be content to be partially obscured: if instead of being content to be praised by him, and deeming his approving smile her worthiest object of ambition and her richest reward, she will seek the gaze of admiration and the language of flattery from strangers: if she be a wife

who opposes wantonly his tastes, or neglects his comfort; who contemns his opinion, and contradicts him with asperity, and resents with unseemly heat his real or unintentional slights: who exhibits indolence and not industry in the management of his household, and either by slovenliness allows all things to sink into uncleanness and confusion, or by extravagance hastens on the approach of poverty and ruin; who neglects even her children, and causes them to rise up in grief and shame for their mother; who gives her maidens constant occasion for reproach and complaint, on account of her ill-temper and worse conduct; who is restless and uneasy at home, but gracious and engaging everywhere else; who by her own conduct makes her husband happier everywhere else than at his own fireside: "or if she be a wife, using her empire over her husband to turn him away from the Lord, as the wife of Jehoram, whose fatal influence the Holy Spirit paints in the single expression, 'Jehoram walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife;' a wife, in short, who constrains her husband to sigh in secret over the hour when he was blind enough to sue for her hand, and to look forward to the day when he shall lay before the tribunal of God the eternal wrongs she has done him, what plea can she offer for her conduct?"*

There are some few things of a general character which may be worthy of notice in surveying this portraiture.

It is a very true and judicious remark of Mr Bridges, that the standard of godliness here exhibited is not that of the religious recluse, shut up from active obligations

* Monod.

under pretence of greater sanctity and consecration to God. Here are none of those habits of monastic asceticism that are extolled by some as the highest point of Christian perfection. Nor does any other part of Scripture, either of the Old Testament or the New, set up a finger-post pointing to the convent. I repeat what I affirmed in a former chapter, that no single practice pleading the sanction of religion, was ever the source of so much pollution and vice, or inflicted so deep a wound on morals, as monasticism. Woman's natural state is the conjugal one, into which she ought not to be, and is not usually, unwilling to enter at the call of Providence, and with all due discretion; and for which she should assiduously prepare herself. Still, should there be some women of singular disinterestedness, or exalted piety, who, either for the benefit of near relations, or from motives of zeal and mercy, and not from a superstitious notion of the superior sanctity of celibacy, shall be willing to forego the duties and felicities of the wife and the mother; who, I ask, shall forbid them? Such was the mind of the apostle Paul, whose words on this subject have been so eagerly wrested in favour of erroneous opinions. "If I search," says Monod, "throughout the whole world for the type of the most useful, the most pure, the most Christian charity, I nowhere find all these conditions better fulfilled than in the good aunt, who by a marvellous sacrifice, accepts the fatigues and the cares of maternity, without knowing its ineffable consolation: a mother, yea, and it may be more than a mother when the question is of serving and supporting, yet setting herself aside the moment the question is only of advantage and pleasure. Sad she may be, but her sadness is heavenly, and transforms

itself completely into love and sacrifice. But if no family engagements bind you, extend your view further; find out a family in all who have need of you; comforting the afflicted; forming or supporting charitable institutions; seconding a pious minister in his labours; in short in every good work for which God appears to have expressly reserved your liberty. Or embrace, for you may, a yet wider sphere. Embrace the world if you will, provided it be in the spirit of charity. In fine, accomplish your mission so faithfully, that when the hour of your death shall arrive, all may rejoice in the happy isolation which permitted you thus to devote yourself: and that amid the tender regrets which shall follow your mortal remains to the tomb, it may no longer be discerned in the sacrifice which you have made, whether you were wife or sister, aunt or mother, relative or stranger."

It cannot fail, I think, to impress every reader of this beautiful description of the "virtuous woman," that the delineation chiefly regards the active virtues of the female character. It pourtrays the clever, energetic, and prosperous female, surrounded by circumstances that call forth her industrious assiduities, invest her with power, and array her with public honour; rather than the quiet, gentle, and retired sufferer, struggling with adversity, or crushed by oppression, whose virtues consist of submission to the will of God, and patient uncomplaining endurance of the wrongs of man, perhaps of her husband, and the brightness of whose character is admired by God and angels in heaven, rather than seen and extolled by men on earth. To the latter I would say, look up with believing prayer to God for the grace that is necessary to fill your

dark sphere with the illumination of that holy virtue, which with lunar radiance shines brightest by night. Little of the glory of the character which I have been describing may fall upon you in the secluded shades amidst which you are called to dwell. In solitude, with no eye to pity, no voice to soothe, no hand to help, you may be called to drink the cup of sorrow. Well, drink it, as did the greatest and holiest sufferer that ever passed through our vale of tears, saying, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" and the time will come when he who loves you better than you love yourself, shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. To those who by divine grace are copying the pattern set before them in this chapter, and are in circumstances to do so, I would say, cast the veil of gentleness, modesty, and humility, over all these fine traits of active, energetic character. Let the passive virtues of your sex blend with and soften the active ones. Be sure to single out that lovely feature, "the law of kindness is on her tongue." With all this masculine energy in womanly conduct, unite feminine tenderness and softness. Whatever else in character you may be, still be a woman, with all a woman's grace and loveliness; and while as a wife, a mother, and a mistress, you wield the authority and exert the influence which belongs to you, remember still there is one in the family, I mean your husband, whose authority is still higher than your own, and that it is at once your duty, and will be for your happiness, meekly and gracefully, though not abjectly and crouchingly, to bow to him.

Young women, I beseech you to make yourselves familiar with this exquisite passage of Holy Writ. It must be a study for you. There is much, very much,

to be learnt from it. You will here see that piety is the broadest and most solid basis of all female excellence, and so far from interfering with temporal duties, will, wherever it is genuine, quicken attention to them. Godliness is profitable for all things, and assists every lawful pursuit. There is not a single good quality in the character which it will not improve, and no one earthly interest, provided it is legitimate, which it will not effectually promote. Do not allow yourselves to be imposed upon by the misrepresentations of its enemies, who will persuade you, if they can, that piety is unfriendly to general character, and inimical to personal happiness; that it enjoins duties unfriendly and forbids pleasures essential, to youthful enjoyment. Upon candid examination it will be found that this objection to it, like all others, is utterly unfounded. Is there a virtue or a practice which can adorn or bless humanity which it does not enjoin? And as to its most solemn, and what some would consider its most sorrowful duty, I mean repentance, I would remind you that this is not the only exercise of true religion; for there is the joy unspeakable of faith, as well as the grief of contrition; and the latter leads on to the former, just as the shower in the sultry heat of summer portends and produces a cooler atmosphere. Religion forbids no pleasure but such as is injurious to the soul, and substitutes the substance of happiness for its shadows. It resembles a fine country in spring, where the hedges bloom and every thorn produces a flower.

Perhaps it will be thought by some a pity that a delineation of the virtuous man, equally minute, comprehensive, and impressive, was not drawn by the hand which gave us this picture of female excellence. In

diminution of our regret however, it is observable how much of what is here said may be copied into the character and conduct of the other sex. There is scarcely a rule of conduct here presented which may not, with a little change, be observed by the husband, the father, and the master. This virtuous woman's fidelity to her husband, personal industry, good management and diligence in her family, consideration for the comfort and necessities of others, kindness of speech and pity for the poor, courtesy to all, and especially her sincere and practical piety, belong to her husband also, and are required of him as well as of herself. These virtues are appropriate to both sexes. They are the general principles of excellence, though adapted here to the female sex. And therefore we recommend husbands to study this portraiture, not only to see what their wives should be, but what is required of themselves also.

But who of either sex is sufficient for these things? None but those whose sufficiency is of God; and He will ever bestow upon docile and humble petitioners at the footstool of his grace, that gracious aid which is equal to the exigency of every case. While enforcing your various duties, and calling upon you to form for yourself a character, which, after exhibiting to the admiration of every beholder on earth its graceful proportions, shall endure with unfading beauty and undiminished grandeur through eternity, I would also remind you of your own indecision, feebleness of purpose, exposure to temptation, and consequent necessity of divine assistance. To obtain this help you must have faith in Christ, the source of all spiritual efficacy, and earnest prayer to God; and none shall seek this grace in vain.

I close a series of discourses on which, in consequence of the rarity of the effort and the delicacy of the subject, I entered, not indeed without some hope, but with much fear and trembling. So far as the pleasure of my own mind in preparing and preaching them, and the monthly attendance upon their delivery from the pulpit, were concerned, my expectations were more than realised. In laying down rules, pointing out defects, and occasionally in comparing the excellences and the faults of the sexes, I have had a somewhat difficult task to perform, and I can scarcely presume to hope that in the performance of it, I have given satisfaction to all parties. I must be contented (and it is no small matter to be so,) with the conviction that I have endeavoured to hold the balance with a steady and impartial hand; and in this I have satisfied my own conscience. I have praised, where praise was called for, and that was very often, but my commendation has not degenerated into flattery; and I have blamed, when blame was just, but it has been without acrimony. My object has been to promote the happiness of both sexes, by improving the character of the one on which so much of the happiness of both depends; and to advance the welfare of society by purifying its earthly source. How far I have succeeded it is impossible that I should ever know, and in the absence of certainty I must be comforted with hope.

I have looked upon woman as related to both worlds, as being bound to this by the ties of a wife, a mother, and a mistress, and to that which is to come, by the grander and more enduring bond of immortality; and therefore as having to attain not only to social excellence, but to that which is individual in special relation

to God, heaven, and eternity. I have contemplated you, my young friends, as the future wives, mothers, and mistresses of the next generation, and have endeavoured to prepare you for discharging the duties of these momentous relationships. It has been my aim in these sermons, to open and prepare for you a smooth passage through this earthly state, gathering out of your way as many stones, and planting as many flowers as I could. And imperfect as may have been my counsels, and defective as may have been my views, I am confident that if my advice be taken and my rules observed, though there may be much sorrow in reserve for you, there will not be wanting a large share of consolation and happiness. It will be your fault, not mine, if life be a dreary blank, a desert without an oasis, a wilderness without a spring. But I have looked beyond this world, to that state where you will find yourselves with all those tender ties fallen from around you, and yourselves standing alone in your individuality and immortality. I am duly aware, and I wish you to be so, that you sustain a personal relation to God, which requires an appropriate and prescribed line of conduct towards him, and for the neglect of which no other duties, excellences, or merits whatever, can be a substitute. It is not merely what you have been as a woman in society, or as a wife, a mother, or a mistress in your family, but what you have been towards God, that will decide your lot in the day of judgment. You may have been the most exalted, noble, and learned of women; the most faithful of wives; the most devoted of mothers; and the kindest of mistresses; but if, with all this, you have not had repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus, and true holiness,

your domestic virtues, as they had in themselves no relation, and in their performanee no reference, to God, will, in the end, meet with no reeompense from him, and instead of "Well done, good and faithful servant," you will hear nothing more than, "They had their reward."

Young women, contemplate your situation as I do, and as I now present it to you. There, further than the eye can reach, stretches out the vast plain of earthly existence, with all its varied landscape, its numerous roads, its busy population, its duties, its pleasures, and its dangers; you are travelling across it, and needing guidance, assistance, protection, and comfort by the way. Step by step you are going on, never stopping, but ever advancing, to what? To that boundless ocean of eternity which lies beyond, on which you must soon embark, and on which so many of your fellow-travellers are every hour adventuring. Yes, yes, you are emigrants passing through time to embark for eternity: and ought you not, like other emigrants, to prepare for the voyage, and for the country to which you are going? Shall your attention be so taken up with the plain across which you are travelling, as to forget your embarkation upon the ocean that lies beyond it? Does one of all the thousands who are now crowding to our colonies, forget for a waking moment, after his determination is fixed, that he is soon to leave his country for one beyond the sea? Oh, no. And will you forget that you must soon, and how soon you know not, perhaps next year, or next month, emigrate to eternity? By what motive shall I induce you to prepare for eternity! By what? Only by itself. For if Eternity be not enough to

induce you to prepare for Eternity, by what other motive can I hope to succeed?

I now, in conclusion, refer you to that day and that scene, when the result of all ministerial efforts for the spiritual welfare of mankind, and of this among the rest, shall be ascertained and made public. Before that dread tribunal, you and I must appear. Not one single person of all who heard, or who shall read these discourses, will then be absent; and among the things to be brought into judgment will be this feeble, yet sincere and earnest, endeavour for your spiritual benefit. In reference to some of you it will, I fear, be found that I have been "the savour of death unto death;" but it is my prayer and my expectation, that to very many I may be "the savour of life unto life." "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

THE FLOWER FADED:

A SHORT

MEMOIR OF CLEMENTINE CUVIER,

DAUGHTER OF BARON CUVIER:

WITH

REFLECTIONS.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

DEDICATION.

My dear S. A.

You cannot have forgotten, that during one of those seasons of severe illness with which it is the will of our Heavenly Father so often to afflict you, I selected for your perusal the short but exquisitely beautiful memoir of Clementine Cuvier, drawn up by the Rev. Mark Wilks, and inserted in the Evangelical Magazine, for February, 1828. You professed to admire her character, and wished to resemble her. Such a desire was commendable, and ought both on your part and on mine, to be assiduously cherished. I determined, therefore, to present you with the narrative, accompanied by a short account of her illustrious father, and some reflections suggested by her early removal from the brilliant scenes by which she was surrounded, and the bright prospects which expanded before her. Although I dedicate this book in an especial manner to you, I design it, of course, for general circulation; and, for that reason, have adopted a form of address suited to young persons of your own sex.

You were not born to the prospects and the hopes of Clementine Cuvier, nor like her have you been called to see their growing brightness suddenly obscured by the fogs that rise from the dark valley of the shadow of death; but the scenes of opening life have for you

also been shaded by the clouds of personal affliction. May you learn more impressively than ever, from this touching narrative, to what source to apply for consolation, and in what manner to obtain it. "It is good," said the prophet, "for a man to bear the yoke in his youth;" and the sentiment has been confirmed by the experience of multitudes of young persons of both sexes; who, to the surprise of their gay companions, have uttered amidst the scenes of their sorrow, the following strange and grateful testimony:

"Father, I bless thy gentle hand;
How kind was thy chastising rod,
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God!

"Foolish and vain, I went astray,
'Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord,
I left my guide, and lost my way;
But now I love and keep thy word.

"'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
For pride is apt to rise and swell;
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
That I might learn his statutes well."

Youth is a time eminently favourable to the cultivation and enjoyment of religion: the body is then vigorous, the mind lively, the time at command, the spirit unoppressed with the rude cares of life, and the heart not bowed or broken with the sorrows of this world. Halcyon season, did the young know it! But, alas! they do not consider this, and instead of remembering their Creator in the days of their youth, they put off the consideration of piety to the uncertain hereafter. Their temptations, I admit, are many. Youth is the vernal season of existence, and it is the

first and only spring of its kind they will ever spend. The whole scene is covered with "living green," and adorned with blossoms of hope. Every thing has the freshness and charm of novelty. They roam onwards, pleased with the present, and still more attracted by the dim visions of the future; and thus, my dear S. A., the character is too generally formed by the influence of things seen and temporal, and formed exclusively for an earthly existence, while things unseen and eternal are left out of view, and God is not in all their thoughts. Hence, Jehovah, in great mercy, sometimes darkens the prospect by affliction, that in the bitterness of disappointment they may turn from the vain shadows of the world, to the substantial realities of religion. How many have been plucked from the vortex of earthly pleasure, by the severe but merciful hand of a chastising God, and have not only made it their confession on earth, but the theme of their song in heaven, "It is good for me that I was afflicted."

God is love, and since he has placed our world, through the mediation of his Son, under a dispensation of mercy, the sufferings of the children of men are rather disciplinary than penal. "He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." His language that accompanies every affliction is this, "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear; this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice: now hear the rod, and who hath appointed it." God hath told us in a few words, the secret of all the sorrows which he calls us to endure on earth; "He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." We cannot imagine that the bitter disappointments and deep sorrows of the

following narrative could have been inflicted by a God that delights in mercy, but with some merciful design. Seek then, my dear S. A., that in reference to your own trials, you may be of one mind with God in sending them; and you know what that is, that you might be a partaker of his holiness. An affliction sanctified is better, said an old divine, than an affliction removed; and the first proof of a sanctified affliction is an earnest and prayerful solicitude that it may be sanctified. In that precious volume, which is at once our pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, our brightest sun in prosperity, and our only lamp in the dark chamber of sickness, it is said, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." The drops of sanctified sorrow on earth are the seeds of immortal joys in the heavenly world. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

To that glory Clementine Cuvier has departed; and do think what heaven must be, where there are millions similar to her. What would earth be if its inhabitants were all as holy, as humane, as intelligent, as she was? But the least in the kingdom of heaven is far greater than she was here below. Oh! who ought to cling to this world, or should be reluctant to leave it, when such a community, gathered around the throne of God and the Lamb, beckon us away to their sublime, their perfect, their everlasting fellowship? May all your sufferings, by the grace of God, be the means of preparing you for that society, and then will you confess that you have not had one too many. That this may be the case, is the prayer of

Your affectionate Father,

J. A. J.

NOTICE OF BARON CUVIER.

Baron Cuvier, the father of the subject of the following memoir, was a Protestant Peer of France, who by the force of genius, diligence and virtue, rose from a comparatively obscure origin to be one of the most distinguished men of modern times. He combined, as he ascended in life, the seemingly incompatible characters of a profound philosopher, and an active statesman. Such were the powers of his mind, and so great was the versatility of his genius, that in whatever situation he was placed, his superiority was soon acknowledged by his associates and competitors. His greatest celebrity was derived from his extensive researches, valuable discoveries, and immortal works in the department of natural history, comparative anatomy, and especially in the subject of fossil geology. As a statesman, it is a striking proof of his abilities and his moderation, and some think of his somewhat too great flexibility of politics, that he made himself acceptable to the despotic Napoleon, to the weak and bigoted Bourbons, and the liberal government of Louis Philippe; by all of whom he was engaged in official functions for his country. "Those who have known this great man," says a writer in the Edinburgh Review, "and have followed him through his brilliant and diversified career, will not charge us with overstrained panegyric, when we say that in all the lists of fame we have enumerated, he not only attained a pre-eminent distinction, but acquired a reputation in each, which might have gratified the ambition of any common aspirant for fame."

"In the splendid museum of natural history and comparative anatomy, which he almost created, we shall see him in the character of an indefatigable collector, a judicious classifier, and a skilful anatomist. As a lecturer on the same subject in the Jardin des Plantes, and in the College of France, he shone as a successful teacher, and enchanted crowded audiences by the magic of his eloquence. As a secretary to the Institute, he acquired by his Eloges the reputation of the most learned and eloquent and powerful writer of this day. As a systematic author, his unwearied research, his lucid arrangement,

and his pleasing, perspicuous, and nervous style, placed him above the philosophical naturalists of every age. As an original enquirer, his discoveries in fossil geology have raised him to the highest distinction, and given birth to new trains of research, which are fast disclosing to us the structure of our planet, and the nature of the convulsions with which it has been so often shaken. As Minister of Public Instruction, as Chancellor of the University, and Inspector General of Education, he conferred on the colleges of France and on her schools, on her religious and charitable establishments, the richest and most enduring benefits; and as a statesman charged with high legislative functions, he obtained for the French people many valuable ameliorations of their laws, and many solid improvements in their political institutions.

"In 1818, Cuvier was elected a member of the French Academy, an honour which he owed to the eloquent Eloges he had read in the Institute; and in the same year he was offered the Ministry of the Interior, but upon political considerations to which he could not accede. In 1819, he was appointed President of the Comité de l'Interieur, belonging to the Council of State, and he was soon after created a Baron by Louis XVIII, who repeatedly summoned him to assist in the Cabinet Councils. He was appointed in 1822, Grand Master of the Faculties of Protestant Theology in the University; and in the Comité de l'Interieur, he was soon afterwards charged with the management of the affairs of all the different religions in France, except the Catholic. At the coronation of Charles X, he officiated as one of the Presidents of the Council of State, and in 1826, he received the decoration of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.

"These and other trappings of distinction which now almost overburthened him, were far from being a suitable preparation for the heavy blow which was about to strike him at the heart. His only daughter, Clementine Cuvier, now his only child, after surmounting the dangers of a sickly infancy, had been reinstated in the bloom of health, and had reached the winter of her twenty-second year. Her acquirements in profound studies were adorned with every accomplishment of her sex; and she united, in a singular degree, all the charms of physical, intellectual, and moral beauty. The loveliness of her person, and the elegance of her manners, were enchased in the fine gold of an ardent yet humble piety, and encircled with all the graces of a charitable and sympathising spirit; and amid the universal admiration which such a character commanded, she courted and she earned the blessings of the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted. About the close of 1826, the first symptoms of a fatal disease

showed themselves in her delicate constitution. Her health, however, was so completely re-established, that in the beginning of 1828, arrangements were made for her marriage with an individual of her own choice, who was in every respect worthy of her love. The ceremony was fixed for the 25th of August; but before the end of July, her former disease returned with redoubled force, and terminated fatally on the 28th of September. Her parents were overwhelmed with grief, and her bridal chaplet withering in the embrace of her funeral wreath, was to one disconsolate heart, an image of still deeper agony. Distracted with his loss, Cuvier sought and found in the most absorbing studies some alleviation of his sorrows; but though with this view he enforced upon himself the most intense and continued labour, yet on the occasion of his first discharge of a public duty, when this high pressure of his mental power was for a time removed, his feelings burst forth in uncontrollable grief. 'It has been related by an eye-witness,' says Mrs Lee, his memorialist, 'that at the first sitting of the Comité de l'Interieur, at which he presided after this event, and from which he absented himself two months, he resumed the chair with a firm and placid expression of countenance; he listened attentively to all the discussions of those present; but when it became his turn to speak, and sum up all that had passed, his firmness abandoned him, and his first words were interrupted by tears. The great legislator gave way to the bereaved father; he bowed his head, covered his face with his hands, and was heard to sob bitterly. A respectful and profound silence reigned through the whole assembly; all present had known Clementine, and therefore all could understand and excuse this deep emotion. At length Cuvier raised his head, and uttered these few simple words, 'Pardon me, gentlemen, I was a father, and I have lost all.' Then with a violent effort, he resumed the business of the day with his usual perspicuity, and pronounced judgment with his ordinary calmness and justice."

Cuvier lived at the Jardin des Plantes for nearly forty years, surrounded by the objects which engrossed so great a portion of his thoughts, and there received every Saturday the men of science of Paris, and all others who visited that capital from any part of the world. Professors and pupils met in his rooms to listen with instruction and delight to his conversation, for he was accessible to all. Although compelled to be a very rigid economist of his time, he was so good-natured and considerate, that if any person who had business to transact with him, called at an unexpected hour, he never sent him away, saying that one who lived so far off had no right to deny himself.

But I advance to the closing scene, which in all probability was accelerated by the withering influence of secret grief for Clementine's death, which though diverted by private study and public business, could not be suppressed. The best account of his death is found in Baron Pasquier's Eloge. "On the 18th of May, he opened, in the College of France, the course which he continued for three years with so much success, on the history of the Natural Sciences. Those who were present at the last lecture of this great master, retain an impression which can never be imparted to such as have not experienced it, and of which I can convey but a very feeble notion. Seldom had he risen to such an elevation; but his auditors were particularly struck with the last phrase which he used, to express his intention of taking a view of the actual state of the study of creation, that sublime study, which, while it enlightens and strengthens the human mind, ought to preserve it from the deceptive habit of regarding things apart from their relation to each other, and distorting them that they may be subjected to the laws of a system; which ought, in short, to lead the thoughts incessantly to that Supreme Intelligence, who governs, enlightens, and vivifies all, who reveals all things, and whom all things reveal.

"At this part of his lecture he displayed a calmness and justness of perception, combined with a depth and seriousness of thought, which led his auditors to think of that Book which speaks of the creation to all mankind. This was the result of his ideas rather than his expressions, for everything in the free exposition which he made, breathed the feeling of the omnipotence of a Supreme Cause, and of an Infinite Wisdom. He seemed as it were, by the examination of the visible world, to be led to the precincts of that which is invisible, and the examination of the creature evoked the Creator. At last these words fell from him, in which it is easy to see a presentiment: 'Such, gentlemen, will be the objects of our investigation, if time, my own strength, and the state of my health, permit me to continue and finish them.' The closing scene of M. Cuvier's life as a public teacher appears to me to have been impressed with peculiar beauty. Who could fail to be deeply affected at the last accents of so pure an intelligence, disengaged from the vanities and the interests of systems? Who could remain cold and insensible before the last look thrown on creation by him who had revealed so many of its mysteries? Who could resist the feeling excited by the view of science revealing eternal wisdom? How noble, how affecting, and how prophetic! So soon to appear before the supreme tribunal, what conviction could he express, what words could he pronounce which would have formed a

more suitable preparation? After this lecture, the first symptoms appeared of the disorder, which, in less than eight days, brought him to the grave. He presided, notwithstanding, on the following day at the Comité de l'Interieur. Soon, however, paralysis of a peculiar kind destroyed in succession the nerves that produce voluntary motion, leaving uninjured those which form the seat of sensation; the members affected thus become completely inert, and yet retain their sensibility. All the assistance of art, lavished upon him by men of the greatest skill, was ineffectual, and it soon became apparent that his end was drawing near.

"Every one knew with what courage and serenity he saw it approach. The unremitting care and attention which were bestowed on him, affected him deeply, but did not diminish his courage. Even to the last, he permitted those to approach who had been on terms of intimacy with him, and it was thus that I was a witness of his dying moments. Four hours before his death, I was in that memorable cabinet, where the happiest hours of his life had been spent, and where I have seen him surrounded with so much homage, enjoying his well-merited success; he caused himself to be carried thither, and wished that his last breath should be drawn there. His countenance was in a state of perfect repose, and never did his noble head appear to be more beautiful or worthy of admiration. No alteration of a too sensible or painful kind had yet taken place, only a little weakness and difficulty in supporting himself were observable.

"I held the hand which he had extended to me, while he said in a voice scarcely articulate, 'You see what a difference there is between the man of Tuesday, (we had met on that day,) and the man of Sunday; yet so many things remain to be done! Three important works to be published, the materials of which are prepared, and nothing remains for me but to write them.' I made an effort to find some words to express to him the general interest which he excited. 'I love to believe it,' he replied, 'I have long endeavoured to render myself worthy of it.'

"It will be seen that his last thoughts were toward the future, and aspiring after glory, a noble desire of immortality! At nine o'clock of the evening of the thirteenth of May, he had ceased to live, having reached only the age of sixty-two, although belonging to a family remarkable for longevity.

"At his own desire, Cuvier was buried in the cemetery of Pére La Chaise, beneath the tomb-stone which covered the remains of his daughter. His funeral obsequies were attended by men of all ranks and opinions, who even in the midst of a raging pestilence, (the

cholera,) were eager to offer on his tomb their last tribute of affection and admiration."

Affecting exclamation! So many things remain to be done! And they were of course left undone. The stern messenger of heaven had received his commission to arrest the philosopher, and was allowed no discretion in executing it; turning a deaf ear, therefore, to the wishes of Cuvier for a respite, seconded though they were by those of the whole scientific world, he carried off his illustrious victim to the tomb. O, what a comment upon the words of the wisest of men, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Reader, when death comes, may this not be your exclamation in reference to the great work, the work of your salvation. Yet how common a case is this! What multitudes are surprised by the last enemy, with not only many works of time unfinished, but the work of eternity not even begun! How many, when the hand of death has been suddenly laid upon them, have started with amazement and horror from their neglect of salvation, only to be convinced that it was too late then to attempt it, and that they had made a mistake "at once infinite and irreparable: and had been guilty of an infatuation, which it will require eternity to deplore, and eternity to comprehend."

MEMOIR OF CLEMENTINE CUVIER,

BY THE REV. MARK WILKS.

Published in the Evangelical Magazine for February, 1828.

Paris, January 11th, 1828.

Dear Sir,

I send you, as I promised, some account of the character and death of Sophie Laure Clementine Cuvier, who was taken from us last September. We had hoped much from her piety, talents, and zeal; but she was prepared for higher enjoyments and more perfect services than those with which I had associated her; and though removed from the sphere in which she promised to be so useful, at the early age of twenty-two, her departure has left an impression as profound and as salutary as might have been produced by many years of active and successful exertion. The frame of Clementine was never robust; in her childhood her health was delicate; but her mind displayed a precocious vigour: when very young, she preferred study to play, and always evinced a desire for improvement, which triumphed over all that is repulsive in serious occupations to the ardour and gaiety of youth. When only thirteen years of age, she accompanied her father to England; and an accidental circumstance revealed the habits of her mind, and the disposition of her heart, at that early age. She lost a book of prayers, which she was accustomed to use: it was found by a friend, who assisted her father in the education of his daughter, all the prayers were written by her own hand, and all had been composed by herself.

As she advanced in years, her amiable and excellent qualities developed rapidly and progressively; she became the delight, and even the instructress of the aged of her rank, and a model for the young; she took her place in all the religious institutions which had been formed in the last few years, in this city, and manifested not merely a benevolent interest in their success, but a Christian and spiritual attachment to the sacred cause they were intended to ad-

vance. During several years preceding her more decided profession of faith in the doctrines of the gospel, it was easy to discover, on particular occasions, by the fixedness of her intelligent countenance, the attitude of her fine form, and the suffusion of her beautiful eyes, that her whole heart was occupied and engaged with the truths and facts, to which she listened with breathless eagerness. Clementine was a member of a committee of twelve ladies who superintended the female school of the Lutheran Church; and she not only attended with regularity the classes, but she visited frequently the young persons in their families, that she might be useful both to the aged and the young. She founded a benevolent society, composed of young females of the two Protestant communions; she drew up the plan, and obtained the necessary assistance. This little society has only existed about two years; but in the course of the last year, more than sixty families were relieved by gifts of clothes and linen, the work of the ladies themselves, and by distributions of bread and meat, purchased with the savings of their purse. Clementine was also one of the collectors of the Ladies' Bible Society, and of the Ladies' Missionary Society; and besides these and other similar occupations, she frequently visited the Hospital for aged Women, where the Protestants were collected in a room while she read the Scriptures, and the Psalms, and prayers of the Church to them, and addressed them with modesty and wisdom, on the subjects that had been presented by their reading, or on those most suitable to their peculiar conditions. In the midst of these useful and delightful exertions, she was assailed by a pulmonary disease. Towards the close of the year 1826, her health was seriously affected; and from the month of December till the February of the following year, she was confined to her bed. It was during this season of suffering, that God more particularly manifested to her the beauty and glory of the gospel, and prepared her for that further manifestation of his love, to which in a few short months, it was her happiness to be admitted. Her habits of respect for religion, contracted in childhood, and manifested in the regular performance of all her relative and social duties, did not satisfy her desires, nor afford tranquillity to her mind. She felt that she must love an infinite object, and that Christ alone could fill the soul in which he had already excited those spiritual appetites which he has promised to supply. Even surrounded as she was by all the enjoyments and illusions of the world, she was only happy as she was conversant with the spiritual and substantial blessings of the kingdom of God. She read and reflected much: dreading on the one hand the pride of reason, and on the other, the impulse of the imagi-

nation, she examined with severe application of mind, both her own religious state, and the doctrines that were presented to her faith. Buck's Christian Experience, Scott's Force of Truth, Gregory's Evidences, Appia's Christian Life, and especially Chalmers' publications, were read with delight; and that they met both her taste and her wants was evident from the numerous extracts that she made of those passages that were more particularly calculated to bring the mind into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

Long after every doubt had been removed as to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, she complained that she did not feel her heart sufficiently affected by the remedy which the gospel revealed, and of which she felt increasingly her need; at the same time she was convinced that faith is the gift of God, and that no man can call Jesus Christ, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. In this state of mind, writing to one of her friends, she said

"Every day brings me fresh proof of my own insufficiency; but 'ask, and it shall be given you; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' These words save me from despair."

Feeling increasingly her spiritual indigence, and especially the necessity of a free and sovereign pardon, she said in another letter,

"It is not God, the Creator of the world, that we really love, but God the Saviour, God who receives us graciously. The heart only feels real love to God, as it embraces the mysteries of the Gospel. The mercy of God, his love for sinful creatures, is manifested in an admirable manner and degree in the work of redemption; and when that redemption is embraced, the heart must be regenerated, and consequently filled with love and gratitude to its Saviour; but till then, it remains cold and insensible. The grace of God rises in my soul; I comprehend the mercy of the Lord Jesus, and certainly I experience the sweetness of his promises."

Such convictions and desires could not but result in that "peace which passeth all understanding," the heart of Clementine was soon filled with delight and joy. In a letter written in April last, she thus expressed herself:

"I want to tell you how happy I am: my heart has at length felt, what my mind has long understood; the sacrifice of Christ answers to all the wishes, and meets all the wants of my soul; and since I have been enabled to embrace with ardour all its provisions, my heart enjoys a sweet and incomparable tranquillity. Formerly, I vaguely assured myself that a merciful God would pardon me: but now I feel that I have obtained that pardon, that I obtain it every moment, and I experience inexpressible delight in seeking it at the foot of the

cross. My heart is full, and it is now that I understand the angelic song 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will towards men.' But that which has especially affected me, and has, by the grace of God, opened to my view all the tender mercy of the plan of our redemption, is the import of those gentle but assuring words, 'He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.'"

"I experience a pleasure in reading the Bible," she said in another letter, "which I have never felt before: it attracts and fixes me to an inconceivable degree, and I seek sincerely there, and only there, the truth. When I compare the calm and the peace which the smallest and most imperceptible grain of faith gives to the soul, with all that the world alone can give of joy, or happiness, or glory, I feel that the least in the kingdom of heaven is a hundred times more blessed than the greatest and most elevated of the men of the world."

Acknowledging with gratitude the comforts she possessed, and blessing the hand that inflicted the sufferings she endured, Clementine diffused around her the happiness she enjoyed. To one of her Christian friends, she wrote as follows:

"Ours is, indeed, a delightful intimacy, for it will never end. Often I anticipate the day when we shall be all united in the same love. O how unhappy must they be, who know not the sweetness of such a hope? and what thanks do we not owe to that God who has given us the experience of its power!"

Her benevolence, always active, now took a character more elevated and more in harmony with the charity of the gospel.

"When I now hear of the errors and evil conduct of my fellow-creatures, or when I witness their perverseness," she said on another occasion, "the disgust which I used to feel, is exchanged for an indescribable movement of the heart: I want to speak to them, and I enter into the meaning of those divine words, 'Verily I say unto you, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.'"

The sight of evil in others, produced also in her an increased feeling of her own weakness and unworthiness, and of the absolute necessity and sufficiency of Almighty grace.

"The certainty that without Divine grace I can do nothing; but that that grace is always with me, that it surrounds me, preserves me, supports me, this sweet assurance fills my heart; and thus I feel most profoundly, that faith alone can satisfy the void which I sometimes used to feel in my soul."

[A heavenly expression animated her countenance, while gentle

and serious reflection was always impressed on her features. There was in her whole deportment something which seemed raised above this world. Never was a more benevolent disposition united with greater intellectual riches; her countenance beamed with delight, when a good action was related; but when satire or unkindness ventured to exhibit itself in her presence, she heard it with a thoughtful air, as if she did not understand what it meant, it was the only subject which seemed to be beyond her comprehension.] "Archives du Christianisme."

The health of Clementine appeared to be sufficiently restored in the beginning of the summer, to permit her parents to wish for her marriage with a gentleman whom she preferred, and whose character justified her preference. The marriage was expected to take place on the 25th of August last, and her sentiments on that occasion were thus expressed in a letter to a friend: "I do not ask of God to make me happy, but to sanctify and purify my soul; and I expect that he will keep and preserve me in the important event. The profound conviction that there is an infinite and merciful Being who orders all things, that not a hair of the head falls without his permission, and that he will control every circumstance for my real welfare, gives me an habitual peace and tranquillity which nothing else could inspire."

It was in the midst of the preparations for her nuptials, that she was attacked by the disease which soon brought her to the grave. So fatal a result was not at first apprehended, either by Clementine or her family; but her mind was familiar with death, and her heart was prepared for heaven. Writing, about the period of her seizure, to an absent friend, she said:

"What sweetness there is in the thought of that eternal life, of that state of rest and love! Then we shall comprehend those delightful words of our Saviour, 'I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am ye may be also.'"

[When her complaint was fully confirmed, and those around her could no longer doubt the result of this painful struggle, she seemed to derive increasing energy from her sufferings, and ceased to experience any fear. She thus spoke to Mr. D. (her intended husband) who was constantly beside her sick couch. "We must be resigned; do not murmur; without doubt I shall be grieved to leave so many persons whom I love; but if it is the will of God, I am ready." These words, "If it be the will of God," "As it shall please God," were incessantly repeated by her; they were her constant answers: and from her lips they were not unmeaning words, but the genuine expression of confidence and submission to the will of God. The

patience with which she bore her various sufferings having extorted expressions of surprise and admiration from her friends, she was most anxious to prevent such remarks in future.] "Archives du Christianisme."

Her disorder soon confined her to her bed, and from the violence of the discharge of blood, she was unable to converse. Her sufferings were great; but her patience, her resignation, and her confidence, were unimpaired. To a friend, who had not seen her during several days, she said, "God has been always with me; and he has holden me by the hand; nature has been impatient and has revolted, but the Lord has been always there, ready to support my courage." To another friend she said, "Pray for me, for I can no longer pray for myself." The accent and the look which accompanied these words were, however, a most powerful prayer. "It is God that supports me; I feel that he is with me, and if he leaves me, I feel his absence in a moment. You know," said she, appealing to her sister,* "that I was never naturally resigned." "If God grants you patience," said a visitor, "he sees that you merit his favour." "Hush," said she, with a most expressive eagerness of manner, "talk not of merit." She manifested for her father and her sister the most tender affection; and on one occasion, when, after a violent attack, she had expressed her desire to depart, the tears of her sister and her parents so overcame her, that she reproached herself for such a wish, and exclaimed, "O, how selfish I am! I will take my medicine, and try every remedy, because I wish to recover for your sakes." She gave to her intended husband a copy of "The Imitation of Christ," in which her trembling hand had marked some passages, and written some lines of Christian affection; and having requested him to place his head before her, she laid on it her hand, and said, "Lord, bless us both! Lord, restore me that I may love thee more; but if thou hast otherwise decided, thy holy will be done."

As a proof of the strength and tenderness of her filial piety, and of her deep solicitude for the spiritual welfare of her parents, an incident may be mentioned which occurred not long before her decease. A number of pious ladies, some of them persons of rank and distinction, had mutually agreed to spend an hour in the week, each in her own retirement, but all at the same time, to pray for the conversion of their relatives. Clementine was one of this little praying band, and most conscientiously kept the sacred appointment: and we can easily imagine what were the hallowed feelings of her soul in those solemn seasons set apart to plead with God for the

* A daughter of Madame Cuvier by her first husband.

conversion of her illustrious parent. One night, when rapidly sinking under the power of her disease, she was heard to say, with considerable emphasis and emotion, "My father, my father." The by-standers, on hearing the expression, sent for the Baron, who came immediately to the bed-side of his dying child. She intimated, however, that it was not her design to have him sent for, and seemed somewhat discomposed at his appearance. Her friends were a little at a loss to account for her conduct, till one of them, who was in the secret of her closet engagement on behalf of her relatives, on looking at the clock, perceived that it was the hour of her intercession with God for their salvation. The cry of "My father, my father," was in fact the audible expression of her wrestling with God for the conversion of the Baron: her feelings had become too strong to be repressed into silent mental prayer, and burst forth in supplication, with strong crying and tears. Nothing could make her forget the hour consecrated to prayer for her beloved father, not her own great sufferings and approaching death; and strong in death, the sacred feelings of a pious child, lived and triumphed in her breast.

[The last hours (September 28) which this heavenly-minded young woman spent on earth, were even more remarkable than any of her preceding days. The night had been passed in a delirium; it still continued; but she had intervals of reason, and her heart never wandered. She was even more than ever pervaded with resignation, faith, and love. Though still detained on earth, her heart incessantly aspired to the heavenly country, whither she was going. "You know," said she to a friend, a few hours before her death, "you are my sister in Christ, for eternity, there is nothing else deserves the name." She perceived that Mr. D. had been weeping; "What is the matter with you?" said she, "I am grieved to see you ill, all is right, since it is the will of God."] "Archives du Christianisme."

She recovered the power of speech again about half an hour before she breathed her last; she called her relatives, but she could not pronounce their names, and could only press their hands, she was calm, she sighed, a sweet smile settled on her lovely countenance: she was absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

An incident which occurred when the coffin was to be closed on the inanimate form of Clementine, furnished an affecting proof of the respect entertained by Baron Cuvier for the religious belief and habits of her whom he had so prematurely lost.

But a short time before her death, she had shewn to one of her most intimate Christian friends, a volume containing the New Testament and the Psalms, which she had had bound together and inter-

leaved with blank pages. "This," said she to her friend, "I design for my wedding present to you." "Indeed," said her friend, "and why not give it me now?" "No, my dear," replied Clementine, "not now, I shall use it myself, and I wish to write something in it before I give it you."

After the first agitation occasioned by her death, her friend remembered the promised volume, and as the present was not less precious as a relic than as a gift, she was eager to gain possession of the book, which she considered as her own. It was not to be found; she examined the chamber herself in vain; she continued her researches without success; the intended bridegroom assured his friend, that he had not, as she had suspected, removed the volume; at length, by enquiring minutely of all the persons who had assisted in the performance of the last offices preparatory to the funeral, the destination of the lost treasure was ascertained.

It is usual in France to raise the hands of deceased persons, place them on the breast, and support them in that position by some object that had belonged to the departed. In this case, a book, a volume of sermons much read by Clementine, had been selected by her attendants. When the Baron came to take his final farewell of the body of his child before the coffin was closed, he enquired what book supported her hands; and when informed, "That will not do," said he, "the Bible was my daughter's book: is there not one here?" Among the books in her chamber was found the interleaved copy designed for her friend; the title page was shewn to the Baron, "Ah!" said he, "that was her book;" and he placed it under the hands of the unconscious daughter: under those hands that had often been joined and raised in prayer for her beloved father.

The lady who had thus lost the promised pledge of her eternal friendship with Clementine, was consoled, and in some degree compensated for her disappointment, by the assurance that the grave of her lamented friend contained the proof that a certain measure of sympathy of sentiment on the most important subjects, united the afflicted Baron and his departed child.

The funeral of this young lady formed a scene of interest and solemnity, unprecedented in this city. Her remains were first carried to the Lutheran Church, where a prayer was offered up amidst the tears and sobs of multitudes, and then deposited in the cemetery of Père La Chaise, where a discourse was delivered by one of the pastors, and another by Mr. Satrandi, a literary friend.

Yours affectionately,

M. W.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, you have now perused this short but interesting memorial of the young, the beautiful, the pious Clementine Cuvier; and while the heart is softened, I would hope, to receive the impression of religious truth, may I solicit your serious and devout attention to the lessons with which the narrative is fraught.

I. Does it not most impressively remind us of the vanity of the world, and that in two points of view—its insufficiency to make us happy, and the uncertainty of its continuance? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." With such a confession did the man go off the stage of existence, who of all the human race was the best qualified to give an opinion upon such a subject. If the possession of royalty, unbounded wealth, peace, surpassing wisdom, and all the sources of sensual gratification, could satisfy the desires of an immortal soul, then had not Solomon been compelled by experience to reduce the sum total of the world's power of giving happiness to two cyphers, and pronounce it to be nothing but vanity and vexation. And now hear the testimony of another, "by whom the world, with its fashions and its follies, its principles and its practices, has been proposed in form to Englishmen, as the proper object of their attention and devotion.

Lord Chesterfield has avowed as much with respect to himself, and by his writings said in effect to it, 'Save me, for thou art my god.' He has tendered his assistance to act as priest upon the occasion, and conduct the ceremonial. At the close of life, however, his god he found was about to forsake him, and therefore was forsaken by him. You shall hear some of his last sentiments and expressions, which have not been hitherto, so far as I know, duly noticed and applied to their use; that of furnishing an antidote, and they do furnish a very powerful one, to the noxious sentiments contained in his volumes. They are well worthy your strictest attention.

"I have seen,' said this man of the world, 'the silly rounds of business and pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently known their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is in truth very low; whereas those who have not experienced, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare: but I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pullies and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machines: and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of an ignorant audience. When I reflect back upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry, and bustle, and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions; and I by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No, for I really cannot help it. I bear it because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing but killing time the best way I can, now that he has become mine enemy. It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of the journey."

Such was the confession in his old age, to a son that

afterwards died by his own hand, of Lord Chesterfield, the oracle of English gaiety and manners.

"When a christian priest speaks slightingly of the world, he is supposed to do so in the way of his profession, and to decry through envy the pleasures he is forbidden to taste. But here I think you have the testimony of a witness every way competent. No man ever knew the world better, or enjoyed more of its favours, than this nobleman. Yet you see in how poor, abject, and wretched a condition, at the time when he most wanted help and comfort, the world left him and he left the world. The sentences above cited from him compose, in my humble opinion, the most striking and affecting sermon upon the vanity of the world, ever yet preached to mankind."* Bishop Horne.

Sir James Mackintosh, one of the most accomplished men and most elegant writers of modern times, in speaking of Madame De Stael, that extraordinary woman who astonished all Europe by her writings and her conversation, observes, "Placed in many respects in the highest situation to which humanity can aspire; possessed, unquestionably, of the highest powers of reasoning; emancipated in a singular degree from prejudices; and entering with the keenest relish into all the feelings that seemed to suffice for the happiness and the occupations of philosophers, patriots, and lovers, she has still testified, that without religion there is nothing stable, sublime, or satisfactory; and that it alone completes and consummates all to which reason and affection can aspire." What a confession from one whom the greatest monarchs of Europe either feared or courted, and who lived amidst the applause of all the rarest minds on earth at the time. Yet she found the world a broken cistern, and turned at last to religion as the only fountain that could satisfy the cravings after happiness which are felt alike by the greatest and the least of the human race. If all the brilliant scenes

which the world presented to this wonderful woman proved to be phantoms, and ended in vanity, what has it to offer that can satisfy ordinary minds?

Precisely the same thing happens in savage as in civilized life, for the soul of man is every where the same in its desires and its disappointments, as long as things seen and temporal are the highest objects of its ambition. An old man in Siberia once said to a missionary, "I will state to you a case, and request your opinion of it. There was a man who, during a long life, wished to enjoy many things, and many of his desires were granted; he wished to have sons, and sons were given him; to have grandchildren, and his eyes have seen them; to be admitted to the feasts and assemblies of the people, and he was gratified with these; to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, and he was a successful hunter; he sought increase of riches, and his cattle multiplied; he wished for length of days, and he is now an old man. But now he has nothing more to wish or hope for in life, for the day of death cannot be far off. He has done with feasting, and travelling, and hunting, and making rich, and now he wishes to know if he may, without making any noise about it, simply worship the God of heaven, without avowing himself a Christian, and give up the worship of the temple gods, but make no formal abjuration of them!"

How near akin to the experience of Solomon, the wisest and richest of men, as described in the book of Ecclesiastes, was that of the poor savage here described; how like to both these was the feeling of Madame De Stael, and Lord Chesterfield; how consentaneous is the testimony of them all with the universal sentiments of mankind; and how clearly and

fully does the experience of the human race attest, that there is a void in the heart of man which nothing but religion can fill, and a yearning which nothing else can satisfy.

But perhaps the history of Clementine Cuvier will furnish an illustration of the emptiness of the world, far different in kind from these, but as likely to impress a young heart as any that could be brought forward. Observe her situation, and mark the rare combination of circumstances which it presented to delight and fascinate an ardent mind. Think of the celebrity of her illustrious father, whose political offices and philosophical researches drew around him all the most distinguished men of France, and made his home one of the Parisian centres of intellectual and national greatness; think of those personal accomplishments and mental acquirements, which excited the admiration and interest of all who knew her; think of the respect and attachment of the humane and religious, whose schemes she supported, and whose institutions she patronised; add to this the gratitude she perpetually received from the persons whose wants she had relieved; and to crown all, think of the attachment of her lover, and the prospect of her marriage; and you will then perceive that the world, invested with its brightest and purest glory, stood before her in a form best adapted to captivate a pure and youthful mind, and to compel it to say, "'Tis enough, I am satisfied; it is good to be here." But did it satisfy her mind? Did it fill her heart, and leave her nothing more to wish for? No. Her memorialist tells us, that, "surrounded as she was by all the enjoyments and illusions of this world, she was only happy as she was conversant with the spiritual and sub-

stantial blessings of the kingdom of God. She felt that she must love an infinite object, and that Christ alone can fill the soul." Even to her the world was nothing more than a broken cistern that could hold no water, and she thirsted, panted, and looked round for the fountain of living water, and found it in religion.

Reader, does the world satisfy you? Perhaps you are a votary of worldly pleasure, and found at all its gay resorts: if so, let me ask you whether there are no occasional feelings of dissatisfaction; no cravings after something better; no surmisings that this is a scanty portion for a rational and immortal mind to live upon; no seasons of envy and disappointed ambition; no felt resentments of a soul finding out that it is mocked with the shadow, instead of the substance of happiness? Does not a time of reflection come, when after the music is silent, the party is scattered, and all the gay pageantry is passed away, and you are alone, the mask drops from the world, and the gay deceiver stands before you a detected impostor, a convicted liar? Are there not seasons of ennui, when under the influence of satiety and disgust, you exclaim in bitterness, "Yes, it is all vanity; the Preacher has said it, and I feel it." Do you not find at times, that you also want an infinite object for the affections, which shall yield, not drops to tantalize, but ever-flowing streams to satisfy; a fountain, a "river of life, clear as crystal?" Hear then the words, listen to the invitation of the prophet, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?

Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Clementine was never happy amidst all she had or hoped for, till she complied with this invitation, till she opened her heart to the enjoyment of religion; and then she found rest and peace for her spirit, and hungered and thirsted no more.

But her short history proves the vanity of the world in another point of view, by impressing us with the transient and precarious tenure of its possessions. The experience of all the parties in this painful event concur in teaching the uncertainty of the best and brightest hopes. If we turn to the bereaved father, we see him standing on the pinnacle of human glory, yet suddenly followed and enveloped even there, by a cloud so dark and dense, as to render nothing visible to him but the gloomy shadow that had fallen upon his prospect; and we hear him, at the very time when a nation, proud of his name, was laying the tribute of its homage at his feet, giving vent to the sorrows of his bursting heart, in those few and bitter words, "I was a father, but have lost all." What did he not hope for from his Clementine, the last, the most beautiful and promising of his children! O what a wreck was made when she died! What blissful anticipations hung withering, like fading flowers, upon her sepulchre, or were interred in her coffin! Earth presented little to interest him, when he saw this angel daughter take wing and flee to heaven: and after he had gazed, and lost her in the cloud which received her out of his sight, who can wonder, that as he looked upon her vacant seat in his own house, he should mournfully exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Nor was his the heaviest loss, the deepest emphasis

of woe, the sharpest pang of disappointment. There was one whose love was more tender, and whose hope was more fondly eager than even that of a father; one who was so soon to receive her as his lovely bride, and call her the companion of his life, the sharer and ornament of his home, the mother and instructor of his children, the comfort and counsellor of his spirit, amidst the sorrows and difficulties of his earthly pilgrimage; whose seraphic piety was to aid him in his heavenward course, and who, perhaps, would attend him as his ministering angel in the dark valley of the shadow of death. O for him to have her snatched from his embrace almost before the altar, when she was so soon to be united with him in the bonds of wedded love! What a mockery of earthly expectations was here! What a proof of the vanity of the world, and the delusive nature of its prospects and of its promises was this! And then think of Clementine herself. Whose opening scenes of life could be more flattering than hers? The morning was at length calm and beautiful; the sky serene and clear; the mists, which at one time had arisen, had vanished, and left an unclouded sun to shine upon her path. Every thing invited hope, and every thing seemed to support and justify the fondest anticipations;

> "But mortal pleasure, what in truth art thou?
> The torrent's smoothness e'er it dash below."

On a sudden, a storm arose, and the aspect of every thing was changed. A mortal sickness came upon her, and from the bed of death she beheld the dark fogs gather and settle upon the prospect; she saw the enchanting scenes which had so lately spread out in vernal

beauty before her, sink one after the other into the deepening gloom; and contemplated nought, so far as earth is concerned, but the cemetery occupying her field of vision! So uncertain, and therefore so vain, are the promises, so deceptive the smiles of the world! O who would hang their best and fondest hopes on the brittle thread of life? Who that is wise will stake his chief happiness on a beating pulse? "The voice said, cry; and he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass." Even granting, then, that you enjoy the world, and that it has performed all its promises, and left you nothing to wish, but that things should remain as they are, how do you know that they will remain as they are? "What is wanting here?" said a courtier to his sovereign, with whom he was riding amidst the acclamations and splendour of a triumphal procession. "Continuance," replied the monarch. So say I. Tell me, if you will, of your youth, your health, the buoyancy of your spirits, your happy connexions, your gay parties, your elegant pleasures, your fair prospects; and then ask me what is wanting: I reply, "Continuance." A single day may spoil every thing; before to-morrow's sun shall rise, you may be attacked by disease and death. You know not what an hour may bring forth. Turn, then, for happiness from the world to religion; this is both satisfying and certain. Nothing can rob you of its privileges; they are vast as the capacity of your soul, and lasting as your eternal existence. Hear the beautiful language of Christ: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst:

but the water that I shall give him shall be in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The following verses pleasingly illustrate the folly of fixing our affections on any thing earthly, and of seeking our happiness in any thing short of God himself.

THE REMONSTRANCE.

"Oh! ever thus from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never lov'd a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away.

I never nursed a dear gazelle,
To glad me with his soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die."

MOORE.

THE REPLY.

"Why hast thou thus from childhood's hour
Fix'd hope on things which soon decay?
Why hast thou lov'd a tree or flower,
Untaught that such must fade away?

Would wisdom choose a dear gazelle,
Howe'er it roll'd its soft black eye,
As that which long could know thee well,
And love thee long, when sure to die?

Lo! now thou'rt come to manhood's hour,
Hast seen thy fondest hopes decay,
Bid thy soul speed in heav'n-born pow'r,
To bliss which ne'er can fade away.

In faith behold enduring joys
Spring up on earth from light above;
Despise life's gilded infant toys,
And rest in God, for 'God is Love.'"

CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

II. The second lesson we learn from this beautiful

narrative, is the nature, the transcendent excellence, and the beneficial effects, of true religion. And what is religion? A question this of infinite moment. Indifference to all religion is shocking in a rational, fallen, immortal creature: and ignorance of true religion is little less so. It is not any kind of religion that will save us, but only that which God has enjoined in his word. It is painful to think how many are most laboriously occupied in following false views of this subject, and to whom may be addressed the words of the prophet, "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." Turn back to the religion of Clementine, and you will see that with her it was a matter of deep earnestness and devout seriousness; it was not a mere form, a set of opinions, a round of ceremonies, but a thing of the heart, a matter that engaged and occupied the soul. "During several years preceding her more decided profession of faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, it was easy to discover on public occasions, by the fixedness of her intelligent countenance, the attitude of her fine form, and the suffusion of her beautiful eyes, that her whole heart was occupied and engaged with the truths and facts to which she listened with breathless earnestness."

To suppose that there can be true religion without great solicitude, and for awhile even an oppressive anxiety, is in the highest degree irrational. Such a subject must produce deep thoughtfulness, meditative solemnity, and devout seriousness. If levity be not checked, if a taste for gaiety be not repressed, if a love of worldly pleasure be not abated, if there be the old fondness

for the company and pursuits of the people of the world, there can be no real piety; religion does not, cannot exist in such a state of mind as this. Persons may indeed go to church or chapel with uninterrupted regularity and untiring constancy, without suspending their amusements, or losing their relish for fashion, folly, or dissipation, just because they may keep up an attendance upon public worship without a particle of religion. Think how momentous, how awfully momentous a thing true piety is; it is the transaction of a soul with God on the high concern of eternal salvation; it is the escape of a sinner from all the consequences of his sin; it is the flight of a human spirit from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the bitter pains of eternal death; it is repentance for all the sins of a life; it is the entire change of our whole moral nature; it is a deliberate surrender of the heart to God; it is the setting out of an immortal mind upon her journey to glory, honour, and immortality: what! and all this, without deep solicitude, intense earnestness, absorbing interest? It were absurd to suppose it. Nothing can better describe or express the first stage of religious experience than the anxious inquiry of the Philippian jailor, "What shall I do to be saved?" What shall I do to gain the salvation of my immortal soul? What! the salvation of the soul a matter of such little consequence, that it may be carried on without any abatement of the natural levity of the human mind, or the ardent thirst after vanity? Is it possible that such an affair can be conducted while the mind is supremely intent upon the pleasures of the world? As well might you imagine a condemned criminal intent at the same moment upon gaining a pardon, and enjoying the society

of a party of card players; or a person afflicted with a fatal disease anxiously seeking a remedy for his complaint, and at the same time enjoying the festivities of a ball room. No. The things are incompatible. Religion must make us serious if it really take possession of our hearts. This very term has been selected, not inappropriately, to describe the commencement of piety in the soul, and it is said of any one recently awakened to the concerns of eternity, "She has become serious." And it cannot be otherwise. Serious we must and shall be, if we are sincere and earnest in religion. Can a shipwrecked mariner, standing upon a sinking vessel, ask without earnestness, the question, What shall I do to be saved? Much less can a lost sinner just awakened to see his danger, and become desirous of salvation, ask the same momentous question without an intense anxiety of mind. Here, then, religion begins, in a clear perception of our sin both by nature and practice; a discovery of our being in a fallen, ruined condition, in consequence of our transgression of the law of God; a sense of just liability to the wrath of God; a feeling of naked and defenceless exposure to the storm of divine indignation: and the necessary result of this will be a solicitous state of mind, which will render not only insipid, but distasteful, the vain amusements and fashionable follies of the world.

The next thing in real religion, and it was conspicuous in the piety of Clementine, is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon and acceptance with God. Observe again her expressions, "It is not God the Creator of the world that we really love, but God the Saviour, God who receives us graciously. The sacrifice of Christ answers to all the wishes and meets all the

wants of my soul. Formerly I vaguely assured myself that a merciful God would pardon me; but now I feel that I have obtained that pardon, that I obtain it every moment, and that I experience inexpressible delight in seeking it at the foot of the cross." "If God grant you patience," said a visitor to her during her last illness, "He sees that you merit this favour." "Hush," she replied, with a most expressive eagerness, "talk not of merit." "Talk not of merit." O how much is expressed and taught in that one short sentence. A sinner has no merit, can have none, in the sight of God. How can he? As a sinner he merits punishment, and how then can he merit pardon? A just man falsely charged with a crime, may merit acquittal, but how can a sinner, truly charged with transgression, deserve or merit pardon? The thing is absurd, for it is a contradiction. If we are sinners, we deserve death; and how then by any subsequent conduct of our own can we deserve life? Even if that subsequent conduct were absolutely perfect, yet inasmuch as we owe it to God for the future, it could not merit the pardon of past transgression. How much less then can it be supposed we can merit that pardon, when we are continually sinning afresh every day! The best doings of even the best men, have some defects or imperfection attending them; surely then no sinner can be saved by his own merits. Hence the declarations of the apostle, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "If by grace, then it is no more of works;

otherwise grace is no more grace." "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." In all these passages, as well as through all the New Testament, it is most explicitly declared, that man has no merit, and cannot be pardoned and justified on the ground of his own works. Let him do what he may, as much as he may, either before or after his conversion, either with or without the help of God, he cannot be accepted to the Divine favour on the ground of his own doings or sufferings. The very idea that he has any merit of his own, or any goodness of nature or of conduct that deserves, and will secure to him, the favour of God and the pardon of his sin, will prevent him from being saved; it will put salvation far from him, and he cannot be accepted of God till he has put it away. This notion was the sin of the Jews, as described by the apostle, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." This is self-righteousness, and it is a state of mind which instead of recommending us to God, is exceedingly displeasing in his sight, for it insults his justice in the law, and contemns his mercy in the Gospel.

If then we cannot be justified by our own works, how is this immensely important blessing to be obtained? The apostle answers the question; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the

glory of God." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Behold then the way of salvation, the true way, the only way, the sure way, the way for all. "By grace are we saved through faith." He that believeth shall be saved. But what are we to believe? That we are lost and ruined sinners, depraved by nature and guilty of innumerable actual transgressions; that we are deserving of the wrath of God, and really exposed to it on account of our sins; that God would be righteous in our destruction; that in a way of mere favour and undeserved mercy, he sent his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; that he is now willing to receive to his favour every sinner, not excepting the chief, who comes to him through Jesus Christ; that our entire, sole, and habitual dependence for pardon, is to be on the mercy of God, granted to us for the sake of the death of Christ; all this we are to believe with the heart, and so to believe as to expect salvation, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Every hope, every idea, every expectation of pardon, must rest entirely upon Christ. Christ is the procurer of our salvation, and faith is the means of obtaining it from him; Christ is the only foundation, and faith is the only way of resting upon that foundation; Christ is our righteousness, and faith unites us to him and makes that righteousness ours. This, this is the religion of the New Testament, this was the religion of Clementine Cuvier, this is the religion of every true

Christian, and is the only religion which will take any one to heavenly glory.

Connected with faith, is regeneration or that New Birth which our Lord thus declared to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The New Birth means that entire spiritual change in our heart and conduct, which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, when our fallen and corrupt nature is taken away, and a holy and heavenly nature is given in its place. The whole bent and bias of the will is then changed, because the taste and disposition of the heart are changed; and, to use the emphatic language of the apostle, the subject of this great moral renovation becomes a new creature, old things are passed away and all things are made new. His nature is changed and not merely his conduct. His tastes, his pursuits, his judgments are altered. His outward actions are but the expressions of inward feelings. He imagines, thinks, feels, purposes, fears, hopes, rejoices, and sorrows differently to what he did. Such is the New Birth, and it is an essential part of real religion; there can be no religion without it. Nor is this necessary only for some persons, the vicious and immoral for instance, but for all, not excepting the amiable, the moral, and the virtuous. The latter as much need to be born again as the former. The New Birth was as necessary for the lovely Clementine, as the odious and execrable Robespierre. No degrees of natural virtue can raise any human being above the necessity of a spiritual change, for all are sinners and all must be renewed.

And can this be done without earnestness, intense

earnestness? No. It begins in seeing and feeling that we are exposed to the condemnation of Almighty God, and it proceeds in urging the enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" Many go to church or chapel all their lives, and yet have no religion, for they have no clear views of their sin, no fear of wrath to come, no heartfelt solicitude after salvation.

Another characteristic of true religion, (and it was seen in Clementine,) is supreme love to God; and what is any religion but a name, where this is wanting; "This is the first and great commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "She felt she must love an infinite object." And how this love was produced, she tells in another place. "The heart only feels real love to God as it embraces the mysteries of the Gospel. The mercy of God, his love for sinful creatures, is manifested in an admirable manner and degree, in the work of redemption; and where that redemption is embraced, the heart must be regenerated, and consequently filled with love and gratitude to the Saviour." This is very true: we shall never love God, and consequently never have true religion, till we believe the love God has to us; for, says the apostle, "We love him because he first loved us." Religion, then, and it cannot be repeated too often, is to love God supremely and practically, so as to delight in his holy, just, and merciful character, to obey his commandments, to approach him in the spirit of adoption, and to seek to please him in all our ways. This accords with the language of St. Paul, "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." He

that would understand what is the religion of the New Testament, the religion that is acceptable to God, the religion that will make him happy, that will wean him from the world, that will comfort him in death, that will take him to heaven, let him study till he understand it, this short but beautiful compendium of it, faith that worketh by love: for it is all included in this.

Having described very briefly to you the nature of religion, it may be of great importance to guard you against some other things which resemble it, but which are only its resemblances. There may be a constitutional dread of God, as of some awful power whom it is dangerous to offend, who is rather an object of aversion than of love, delight, and confidence, and whom it is desirable to propitiate in some way or other, as we would a malevolent being who had our destiny at command. This is not religion. There is an educational reverence for Him, which though it keeps its subject from all scoffing at sacred things, all ridicule or persecution of pious people, and leads him to manifest something of respect for religious places and services, is yet unaccompanied by true repentance, faith in Christ, and supreme love to God. Nor is this religion. Superstitious awe, the awe which comes over the mind at the grave, where all men are serious in spite of themselves, or during the solemn explosions of a tempest, when the imagination seems to recognize God's voice in the thunder, and the flashes of his eyes in the lightnings; or which seizes the soul during the solemn stillness of midnight, when deep sleep falls upon man, and there is silence, and the image of the Invisible One, the Spirit of Him who maketh darkness his pavilion, passes before us; this, though it causes fear and trembling, is

not true piety. Nor is it a mere religious sensibility, a sentimental imaginative emotion which is awakened by the aid of pictures and carved work, speaking to the eye on sacred subjects, or is produced by the power of music and poetry addressing the ear; nor is it the effect of the imposing pomp of Gothic architecture, either whole or in ruins, stealing over the senses, and disposing the mind to pensive, devotional, and solemn melancholy. All these may exist, and yet there may be no true piety; nothing but a spurious pretence, which is so different from real godliness, as scarcely to be called a resemblance.

Nor must I omit to caution you against another pretender to religion, more specious than the things just mentioned, but not more deserving of the name of true piety; I mean that admiration of the power, wisdom, and beneficence of the Creator, in which science indulges as it surveys the proofs of benevolent intelligence with which the universe is replete. It is not, it cannot be my intention to depreciate the advantages of science, nor to repress the adoring wonder and delight with which it connects the works which are seen and made with a Divine artificer. Such books as Paley's Natural Theology, and the Bridgewater Treatises, may be read with instruction and advantage by all; but it is never to be forgotten, that it is by revealed and not by natural religion that the sinner is to be saved. It is Christianity, and not deism, that will take us to heaven. The whole material universe with all its wonders, cannot tell us for certain whether the soul of man is immortal, or whether sin can be pardoned. It is the book of Scripture, not the book of nature, that must be studied, to gain an answer to the question "What must I do to be

saved?" Hence it is clear, that it is not mere science, however profound; no, nor is it even the admiration of the Creator however profound, to which in some cases it leads, that will save the soul; but those sentiments of repentance, faith, humility, holiness, and dependance, which are to be obtained from the Word of God. Many a man who has been willing to act as High Priest in the Temple of Natural Religion, and to conduct its ceremonies, has refused in the pride of his intellect to bow before the Christian altar, and to approach by faith the blood-sprinkled throne of grace. Let no one mistake, then, for genuine devotion the raptures with which he gazes upon the beautiful scenes of nature; the sublime elevation of soul with which he surveys the spangled heavens by night, or the blue sky, the vast ocean, or the varied prospect by day. It is all mere poetry, but not piety, if penitence and faith in Christ, and love to a holy God, be absent. It is God in Christ, God reconciling the world to himself, God the just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, and not merely God the Creator, that is the object of homage to a true Christian. The religion that will save us, is the religion of the cross; the religion of a broken heart and contrite spirit; the religion that is daily fed by the sincere milk of the word; that is sustained by prayer and meditation; that sets its affections on things that are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God: and such was the religion of Clementine Cuvier.

But look now at the effects and consequences of religion as they appeared in Clementine. Trace them in her usefulness. See her, like her divine Saviour, ever going about to do good, greeted wherever she went

by the smiles of gratitude with which her compassion lighted up the countenance of sadness, and the tears of joy which her beneficence drew from the eye that was darkened with despair. Where in all the theatres, the ball-rooms, or soirees, of Paris, could there have been found among the daughters of fashion one to whom the wretched owed so much as to her? A love of pleasure withers the affections of the heart from the needy, as the east wind does the leaves of the flower; it is religion that, like a summer's sun, causes them to expand and shed their reviving fragrance. To do good is God-like, both in communicating blessedness and experiencing it too; and there is no good so wide in its comprehension of benefits, nor so lasting in its duration, as that which we do to the souls of our fellow-creatures. Mere humanity only smoothes the passage of its object to the sepulchre, but the religious benevolence which aims to convert a sinner from the error of his ways, and save a soul from death, seeks to confer the boon of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. Think not that I am advising you to withhold your efforts from attempting to relieve the temporal necessities of your fellow-creatures. The Saviour of the world, while achieving the sublimer object of saving the soul, thought it not beneath his mercy, or unworthy of his dignity, to bestow ease and comfort upon the body. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind; in short, he had an ear to listen to every tale of woe, and a hand to dispense every kind of benefit. Imitate his example. Where is woman seen to best advantage, invested with her greatest charms, and shining in her purest radiance? Not in the gay circles of fashion, dazzling by the elegance of her dress, the beauty of her

person, and the vivacity of her conversation; the object of envy to one sex, and of flattery and admiration to the other. O no! but in the chamber of sickness, a ministering angel to the sufferer, stripping poverty of its terrors, and assuaging the violence of pain, by efforts of kindness which none can perform as she can: in the hovel of want, carrying a supply, or that which shall procure it, for the poor destitute creature who is "faint and despairing of to-morrow's bread;" in the almshouse, binding up the heart of her that had seen better days, and whose broken spirits revive for one short hour under the sunshine of her affability and kindness; these are the brightest scenes of female honour and happiness too. On these visits of mercy she is watched with the smiles, not only of approving angels, but also of an approving God; while the testimony of conscience sanctions the deeds of her beneficence.

But there is, I repeat, a holier kind of mercy, a more comprehensive and enduring kind of charity still, which she can perform: I mean mercy to the soul, which is the soul of mercy. The soul, the soul! What a word is that, the immaterial, rational, and immortal principle! "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This is the language of him that best knew the value of the world, for he made it; and of the soul, for he redeemed it; and who could not therefore appreciate the soul at too high, or the world at too low a price. The salvation of immortal souls is the chief object of the infinite benevolence of God, the centre of his schemes, and the consummation of his works; it is that for which the Son of God became incarnate, and died upon

the cross; for which the Holy Spirit is poured out from on high; for which the Bible was penned by inspiration, and the whole apparatus of religious ordinances was constructed; which moves the admiration of heaven, and excites the envy and rage of hell. In this great work you are invited to co-operate, and thus is the opportunity given to you to enter into fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Yes, there is something which you may do, without starting from your sphere, or violating the delicacy of female modesty, or usurping any ecclesiastical functions. Like the lovely and benevolent Clementine, you can superintend or aid the education of the young and untaught poor; you can carry the religious tract to the abode of female ignorance; you can read the Scriptures to the poor and aged of your sex; or you can visit them in their sickness, and speak words of instruction and consolation in their ear; and you can also aid the operations of Bible and Missionary Associations in company with, and under the direction of matronly friends. In all these ways you may do good, and thus, in the only true sense of the words, may labour for immortality. You may do something in diffusing that holy light, which in this extraordinary age is spreading like the dawn of a spiritual day over the face of a benighted world. The voice has gone forth from the throne of the Redeemer, "Behold, I create all things new." And you, each of you, that shall read this book, are invited to assist in the great and glorious renovation.

You should observe the moral signs of the times, and notice the features of the age in which it is your destiny to live. They are of deep interest, and of a deeper importance. The wintry age of the world is

going by, and the principle of spiritual fertility is beginning to show itself in the sprouting verdure and swelling buds of spring, that are to be seen on every hand. You ought to notice this, and to feel that you should do something in preparing for the beauties of summer, and the harvests of autumn. Human life has now acquired additional value as it respects society and posterity, and selfish indolence a deeper criminality. A spirit of holy enterprise is the spirit of the age. Every thing is replete with energy: nothing is dull or stagnant. The heavens seem full of voices, and the earth of motion. Nor are the agents and emissaries of evil torpid and quiescent. All the hosts of darkness are marshalling to meet all the forces of heaven in the valley of decision. At home and abroad the principles of truth are coming into closer conflict with those of error. It is a contest about the world's salvation; and we know the result. The hand of prophecy has drawn aside the veil that hangs over the future, and discloses to us all the nations of the earth reposing in peace and happiness under the sceptre of Christ. Set your hand to the work. Every thing invites to action, and appeals to your ambition. Many voices from many quarters say to you, "Do something; do it, do it." Disregard the sneers of the scoffer, and the suggestions of the timid. Happily you are not in want of means, instruments, and companions. Benevolent exertion has become fashionable, and though it should not be taken up for the sake of fashion, yet this is an additional incentive and encouragement. Many of your own age, and sex, and rank, are at work in doing good, and inviting you to become their co-workers. Accept their invitation. It is no less your felicity than your duty. He that lives only for his own

gratification has the pleasure derived from only one person's enjoyment; but he that lives for the welfare of others, multiplies his bliss by the number of the objects of his mercy; he expands the sphere of his enjoyment till it fills that of his benevolence; and where he cannot be gratified by considering what he has done, he is pleased to think of what he attempted to do; and even finds consolation in his wishes, when they, as is often the case, outstrip his attempts.

We cannot tell all the reasons why an infinitely holy, wise, and good God has permitted evil to exist; but one of them doubtless is, that we should be put upon our probation in contending against it in faith, hope, and charity, and thus both prove and strengthen our own piety, by engaging in the contest; and one great part of the mission of every man on earth is to contend with evil in some of its forms. Young people should know this as they enter upon existence, and never forget it, as they journey onward through a region crowded as this is with ignorance, crime, and wretchedness. It is a noble ambition to leave the world holier and happier than we found it, and it is demanded of us all, both by heaven and the supplications of a groaning earth.

Compare, in moments of sober thought, the pleasures of worldly amusements with those of benevolence, and say which are to be preferred. I will allow that the votary of fashionable enjoyments has her agreeable anticipations and reflections; and I can fancy her sometimes looking back upon a round of occupations, with some such thoughts as the following: "On such a night I was at the rout; how brilliant was the party, how tasteful and varied the entertainments, how agree-

able the evening. Little, if at all inferior to this, was the concert, that followed a few nights afterwards: what exquisite music, and how enchanting the singing. And then, the crown of all, the ball. I have never enjoyed myself more. And all, I hope, will soon be repeated, and then I need envy nobody."

Listen now to the reflections of benevolence. "O God, I thank thee for putting it into my heart to do good to my fellow-creatures, and for bestowing upon me, by thy grace, the bliss of making others happy. I have beheld the dark scenes of human woe lightened up with joy at my approach, and the children of sorrow smiling through their tears in my presence. 'When the ear heard me, it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' I have been made the instrument of guiding ignorant children to the fountains of knowledge; of introducing the Bible to families, where not even a stray beam of divine truth had ever before entered; of directing to the house of God, feet that had wandered perpetually in the Sabbath-breaker's path. I have seen the tears of penitence flow down the cheek of the once hardened transgressor; I have with delight and gratitude witnessed the beauty of holiness adorning the character which was once deformed by the enormities of vice, and have seen a hope full of immortality sparkle in the eye that was beginning to close in death. O who that had ever seen the joy, and received the thanks, of a sinner converted by her efforts from the error of his ways; the acknowledgments of a soul saved from death, would doubt the infinite superiority of the pleasures of benevolence over

those of fashionable amusements? I bless Thee, O God, that thou hast caused me to exchange the one for the other."

Nor is this all. The fruits of holy zeal and of religious compassion will be gathered in another world. In communicating the knowledge and principles of divine truth, we are sowing seeds of which the harvest will be reaped in eternity, and throughout it. What we do for the mere temporal comfort of mankind is mortal, but what we do for their spiritual welfare is immortal. If we become the instruments of saving but one soul from death, we start an immortal mind, a glorified spirit, in a career where we shall see it going on from strength to strength, adding knowledge to knowledge, holiness to holiness, happiness to happiness, making approaches to goodness and bliss, which are all but infinite, for ever adorning the heavens with new beauties, and brightening with the splendour of moral glory through all the ages of eternity. And God shall behold this his new creature for ever increasing its glory, and for ever drawing nearer to himself. There is something so transcendent and ineffable in this, as to satisfy, and nothing less will satisfy, the lofty ambition of religious benevolence. Such is the prize held out to all, who having sought salvation for themselves, are anxious to do something for the salvation of others. It will be found by all who make the experiment, that efforts of benevolence, carried on under the pure motives of sincere piety, secure the greatest happiness attainable in this life.

It may be next mentioned as one of the great excellences of religion, and one of the proofs of its incalculable value, that it is the only acquirement that can be considered an education for heaven. Destined, as you are,

reader, to fill a station and act a part on earth, your friends do wisely in securing for you all the advantages of the best education they can obtain. Your knowledge cannot be too various or too great, provided the useful is blended with the ornamental: and it is not much to your credit if you are not ever seeking to build upon the foundation that you laid at school. Cultivate a love of knowledge, a taste for reading, a spirit of acquisition; for you may hereafter turn to good account all you accumulate. Remember, however, that could you acquire all useful and all ornamental knowledge; and add to this the most finished elegance of manners, all, in the absence of true religion, would leave you as uneducated and unfit for heaven, as the savage of the woods. For what is heaven, and in what does its happiness consist? It is not a state of sensual existence, for the body of the resurrection is a spiritual one; the gratifications of appetite, the pleasures of our animal nature, have no place there. The objects which now gratify the taste of the lovers of pleasure, have no existence in heaven. Nor is it a mere social state of being, where friends and lovers, parents and children, meet to part no more, and blend in all the delights of renewed intercourse. Nor is it a mere intellectual state, where science will be attained in its highest perfection, and natural religion be carried to its loftiest height. It is true we shall know all things, the whole range of nature, and the laws of the universe among the rest: but this is not the view the Scriptures give us of heaven, and we know nothing of heaven but what the Scriptures do teach us. Heaven is a state of holy, intellectual existence, and all its happiness is holy too. It is the dwelling-place of the holy God, holy angels and holy men. It is the very element of holiness: the

native place and final home of religion. The happiness of heaven must be like itself, a holy happiness, a religious felicity. It will arise from being in the presence of God, and beholding his glory; from being like him, loving, serving, resembling, enjoying him, and the consciousness of being beloved by him. Hence, said Christ, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory!" The apostle Paul, in prospect of dissolution said, "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ." He also represented it to others as the very essence of heavenly bliss; "So shall we be ever with the Lord." The description of the apostle John is also to the same effect. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He (Christ) shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

It is evident, then, that if this be the nature of heaven, there must be a meetness for it, a preparation, an education; and that the education must be appropriate. If heaven be a religious state, then religion can be the only education. What conceivable relation have any of the branches of a literary, or scientific, course of study, to a holy state of existence? Is a person fitted to enjoy the presence of God, or to love and serve him; prepared to join in the admiration of our Redeemer, and meetened to blend in the holy intercourse of saints and angels, by a knowledge of the languages, or an acquaintance with natural history, or skill in the elegant arts, or the highest polish and grace of manners? These requirements are suitable for earth, but what possible connexion can they have with the enjoyment of spirits in glory? To love God in perfection is the consummation of hea-

venly bliss, and therefore the love of God on earth is the only preparation for such a state. God in himself, viewed apart from his works, is the first truth and chief good, and it will be the occupation and felicity of the blessed through eternity to know, love, and enjoy him as such. Thus was Clementine educated under the effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit, for the enjoyment of the Divine presence. Her attainments in profound science, and in all feminine and elegant accomplishments, were far beyond those of most of her sex. Under such a father as hers, it may well be supposed how carefully, and with what success, her mind was cultivated. Had this, however, been all, what would it have availed her? She lived not to diffuse the knowledge she had acquired. The care of her parents, the skill of her teachers, and her own assiduity to prepare for her station, were all bestowed on the culture of a flower, that was only for a very short time to display its beauty, and shed its fragrance upon earth, and then wither and die; they trained a pupil that was not long to employ the knowledge accumulated in her highly-gifted mind. But all this while she was growing in grace and knowledge in the school of Christ; training under an infallible teacher, to bear a part in the occupations and felicities of the skies. "What sweetness is there," she said, "in the thought of that eternal life, of that state of rest and love. There we shall comprehend those delightful words of our Saviour, 'I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, you may be also.'"

My youthful reader, let me implore you to keep this sentiment in view, that whosoever may educate you for earth, you must have the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and be made a partaker of true reli-

gion, if you would be educated for heaven. In the absence of this, all your other acquirements, however varied or perfect, will be but as the garland, beautiful and fragrant as it may be, that adorns the victim led forth to be sacrificed.

The momentous importance and transcendent excellence of religion, arise from its being the great end of life. If not, Clementine Cuvier lived in vain. She saw every thing that was desirable in the world before her, but was permitted to touch nothing. The lovely vision of a happy life on earth illumined her path, but vanished as she gazed upon it; and but for her religion, it may be truly said, she was born only to disappoint, and be disappointed. How often do we see, as in this case, a young person, who when her education is completed, and she is prepared to bless and be blessed; when she is just fitted to become the grace and ornament of her circle, is cut down like a flower, on which the gardener had bestowed his greatest care, and which is taken from him just as its full-blown beauty is about to reward his labour, and become the pride of his greenhouse. Many a youth, on whose education no pains nor expense have been spared, and whose diligence has well rewarded the anxiety of his friends, is removed by death, just at the very time when he is entering on public life, amidst the high raised expectations which his talents have awakened. If there be no future state, how just would be the exclamation of the Psalmist over such withered blossoms as these, "Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" If however there be, and we know there is, a future state, to which this is only preliminary and preparatory, none have lived in vain, if they have lived long enough to be made partakers

of true religion. There is an eternity of happiness ever awaiting the Christian beyond the grave; and faith, love, and holiness are the preparatives for it; and she who has attained these, has answered the end of her existence and lived for noble purpose, let her die at what age, or go away from what scenes or what prospects she may. She may die too soon for others, but not for herself. She has lived long enough to ensure glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life; and all that she has lost, or can lose, by going away early to heaven, is but what the child who has finished her education loses, by being removed earlier than usual from her school pleasures, to the richer enjoyments of her father's house. Religion secures to us the great end of life, and makes it worth while either to live to extreme old age, amidst the greatest poverty and destitution, or to die amidst the vigour of youth, and the most brilliant illusions of hope. Weep not, then, for Clementine, when you think of her early removal from such flattering prospects, for though she went from much on earth, she went to infinitely more in heaven. Even to her, death was gain; she had secured the crown of glory that fadeth not away, to which the bridal chaplet would have added but little, it would have yielded only a few years of mortal joys, and she would so long have lost the joys of heaven.

Reader, have you ever asked yourself the question, What is the end of my existence? For what purpose did the Creator send me into the world? If you have not, it is high time you should. You may be young, and on that account it is the more proper, in some respects, that you should urge these interrogations upon yourself. When life is beginning, it becomes you, as

you are setting out upon its journey, to enquire for what purpose it is to be undertaken, and whither it will lead. It must come to an end soon, and May come to an end suddenly. Conceive of the catastrophe of having misunderstood the end of existence! What a mistake! A mistake never to be rectified, since we can live but once. Do then enquire what, amidst many inferior ends, is the one great object, having gained which, we have secured the main purpose of our creation, miss what else, lose what else, or die when we may; and having neglected which, we have lived in vain, even though we have accumulated all things besides. It cannot be wealth, rank, fame, knowledge, pleasure, for they are so uncertain as to our obtaining or holding them, and so unsatisfying in their nature; we may be so very soon and so suddenly taken from them by death; and they have so little connexion with, and such an unfriendly influence upon our eternal happiness, that it would be an offence against the wisdom and benevolence of God, to suppose that he intended they should be the main object of human life. No. He has himself told us his design in creating us and sending us into the world, in the following passages of his word. "Get wisdom, (religion,) get understanding; forget it not. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." "One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." These passages decide the question, and point out true piety as the end of the Creator in placing us on earth. We are here on a probation for eternity, on trial for heaven:

so that we are not only fearfully and wonderfully made, but far more fearfully and wonderfully placed: and it is melancholy to see the multitude, notwithstanding these explicit declarations of God, who must know his own design in creating us, forgetting, neglecting, and opposing his merciful intentions, and living only for the present world. How inexpressibly painful is it to see them wearing out life, coming to its close, and quitting it for ever, in total oblivion of the great purpose for which it was granted.

So certainly is religion the great end of life, that it may be truly affirmed of all who die without it, that however long they have lived, or whatever, in other respects, they have attended to, they have lived in vain. However they may have spent their time, it is, as to its higher purpose, all lost. Whatever they have been engaged in, they have done nothing; but have been ingeniously trifling, laboriously idle, and industriously negligent. They may have gained much; much knowledge, wealth, reputation, comfort, pleasure; but they have been losing all the while, infinitely more than they have gained, for they have lost their soul. They have been busily employed in building up their earthly fortunes, but they have been no less busy in ruining their immortal interests. They may have gained a name and a place in the temple of fame, but they have lost the final approval of God. They may have lived for the temporal good of all nations and all posterity, but they have neglected to live for their own eternal good; and therefore, in every view of the case, they have lived below, infinitely below, the ends of the Creator in their existence; and if they had right views of their mistake at the last, they would go down to the grave, though laden

with years, and riches, and honours, uttering the melancholy confession, "Life with me has been a lost adventure."

With all earnestness then, let me implore you to enquire if you have taken a right view of this momentous subject, and to examine whether you have made any thing else than religion the great object of your pursuit. If so, it is not happily yet too late to correct the error. You have now learnt, if not before, the sublime and merciful purpose of God in sending you upon earth, even the salvation of your immortal soul. Be thankful for the information. Rise and contemplate the prospects before you, and the work assigned to you. Look before you. Consider your destiny. Be this your purpose, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and be this your prayer, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes: make me to go in the path of thy commandments: and turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

I now exhibit religion to you in another view of its excellence, as yielding to its possessor the most substantial happiness. Yes, happiness; and it is a delusion of the father of lies, to represent it otherwise.

It is a very common, but certainly a very great error, to consider religion somewhat in the light of a necessary evil; a something to be endured, but not to be enjoyed; which is to be regarded with dread, rather than contemplated with desire; a scheme of penance, but not an act of choice, intended to conciliate an angry Deity, rather than to please a God of love; in short, a gloomy obstruction to the joys of our social existence, which is to be avoided as long as possible, and to be resorted to only when those joys can be no longer experienced.

Mistaken and shocking idea! How contrary, not only to the word of God, which declares it, but also to the experience of those who have proved it, to be a peace that passeth understanding, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory!

You have thought, because you have been told so, that it is a state of gloom and melancholy. But who told you so? Who and what are the persons that have brought this ill report upon it, and have dared to contradict the testimony of God, whose holy word has pronounced it to be a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace? Are they persons who have tried it, and who therefore speak from experience? No; never having given themselves up to its influence, they are no better judges of its excellence, than he who has no palate is of the sweetness of honey. You should hearken to the testimony of those who are pious, myriads of whom, in palaces and mansions, as well as in cottages; amidst wealth, rank, and splendour, as well as amidst poverty; in the bright day of prosperity, as well as in the dark night of adversity; in the gay scenes of a garden of Eden, as well as in the dreary vacancy of a wilderness; have declared that till they yielded their hearts to the influence of religion they knew not what happiness was. Thousands of youth, with all the sources of worldly amusement at command, and all the springs of fashionable gaiety flowing around them, have turned away disappointed and disgusted, to seek and find their bliss, in the service of God. But I refer you again to the testimony of this beautiful young woman: "I experience a pleasure," she said in a letter to a friend, "in reading my Bible, which I have never felt before; it attracts and fixes me

to an inconceivable degree, and I seek sincerely there, and only there, the truth. When I compare the calm and the peace which the smallest and most imperceptible grain of faith gives to the soul, with all that the world alone can give of joy or happiness, I feel that the least in the kingdom of heaven is a hundred times more blessed than the greatest and most elevated of the men of the world." Striking testimony, and the more striking on account of the source from whence it comes. This is not a voice from a convent, or an alms-house; this is not the language of one whom the world had disappointed and disgusted, and who in a spirit of misanthropy turned to religion as a substitute for its former pleasures; it is not the experience of a bed-ridden cripple, making a virtue of necessity, and seeking consolation from religion, because every other source of happiness is cut off. No. It is the experience of a young lady, residing at the very centre of all that could dazzle the mind and fascinate the imagination, in the gayest and most brilliant city in Europe; whom the world in its most alluring form was perpetually assailing and seeking to captivate.

And why should this surprise you? Why feel astonished that religion should yield such pure and satisfying bliss? Think of its component parts; its elements are Faith, Hope, Love: think of its privileges, the pardon of sin, justification before God, adoption into his family, the witness of his Spirit that we are his children, the image of his glory upon the soul, the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, the consciousness of his favour, daily communion with him, abounding consolation in trouble, hope in death, the prospect of eternal life: think of its duties, the perusal of the

Scriptures, the stillness of meditation, the soarings of devotion, the fervour of prayer, the rapture of praise. Is there any wonder that this should give happiness? What was Paradise? The perfection of religion. What will heaven be? The eternal enjoyment of a perfect religion. What is it that in thousands of instances, has made Christians happy in the hovel of poverty, in the languor of disease, in the hour of misfortune, in the agonies of dissolution? Religion. What is it that has irradiated with brightness and glory the Christian prisoner's cell, lightened the captive's fetters, and made the martyr sing at the stake? Religion. O! what a power to bless must it contain, when it can conquer all these opposing circumstances, and distil joy and peace into minds seemingly so full of wormwood as to leave no room for any thing but woe, and to render everything else out of season and out of place!

If you want pleasure, then, here you may find it; and to exhort you to attend to religion, is but another form of entreating you to be happy. "Here, in piety, is a pleasure, high, rational, angelical; embased with no attendant sting, no consequent loathing, no remorse, or bitter farewells. A pleasure made for the soul, and the soul for it, suited to its spirituality, and equal to its capacity. It is the foretaste of heaven, and the earnest of eternity. In a word, it is such an one as being begun in grace, passes into glory, blessedness, and immortality, and those pleasures that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man to conceive of."

I have alluded in the foregoing description of the happiness of religion, to its power to support the mind in prospect of death; but this is too important a view

of it, and too affectingly illustrated by the dying experience of Clementine, to be so summarily dismissed; and I must therefore refer to it at greater length. It is an awful thing to die. Death is that monster, from the sight, and especially the touch of which, the whole animal creation, and man above all, turns with instinctive dread and horror. What is it that can not only enable us to overcome this revulsion and recoil, but also go forward to meet the last enemy in peace and hope? Religion, and nothing else; and it is the glory of Christianity that it erects its brightest trophies on the tomb, and illumines the dark valley of the shadow of death with the brightness of a hope full of immortality. Look into the dying chamber of Clementine Cuvier; see that lovely young creature, when every thing tended to make death terrible, and life desirable; when the fame of her distinguished father, the affection of her mother, and above all, the plighted love of him who was still dearer to her heart than either father or mother, all invited her back to the world: see her with such friends around her dying couch, and such scenes before her imagination, bowing in deep and peaceful submission to the will of God, when he called her to put on the shroud instead of the bridal attire, and to descend into the grave, instead of occupying the house furnished for her reception. Again, look at that touching scene which is thus described. "She manifested for her father and her sister the most tender affection; and on one occasion, when after a violent attack she had expressed a desire to depart, the tears of her sister and her parents so overcame her, that she reproved herself for such a wish, and exclaimed, 'O, how selfish I am! I will take any medicine, and try

every remedy, because I wish to recover for your sakes.' She gave to her intended husband a copy of the 'Imitation of Jesus Christ,' in which her trembling hand had marked some passages, and written some lines of Christian affection; and having requested him to place his head before her, she laid on it her hand, and said, 'Lord, bless us both! Lord, restore me, that I may love thee more; but if thou hast otherwise decided, thy will be done.'" O Christianity, these are thy triumphs! For such a person to die in such a manner! What a mixture of gloom and glory is here! Reader, could you in similar circumstances die thus? Have you the piety that could enable you to turn with calmness and hope from such visions of earthly bliss as presented themselves to her eye, and see in lieu thereof, the grave? Have you thus learnt to die? Shall not this scene teach you the reality, the power, the transcendent excellence of religion? Take a last look on that seraphic young Christian, see her with

> "A mortal paleness on her cheek,
> But glory in her soul;"

and then present for yourself this prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers."

I cannot, however, allow you to pass from the contemplation of this dying Christian, without asking you to compare her end with the closing scene of the Philosopher. What Baron Cuvier's precise sentiments on the subject of revealed religion were, does not appear from any thing that I have read. Whether he contented himself with those ministrations which he performed with such ability at the altar of natural religion, and thus added one more to the highly gifted minds, who

are content with worshipping God the Creator, without doing homage to God the Saviour, and the Sanctifier; or whether he paid a sincere homage to the Redeemer of the world, I pretend not to determine. Certain, however, it is, that in his last moments, so far as the account of his friend extends, there were no expressions of faith, first looking for comfort and peace to the cross of Christ, then penetrating the veil, and ranging through the regions of immortality; no lively hopes of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; no desire to depart and be with Christ; no felt attractions of the presence of God in heaven. His admiring eulogist tells us of his longings after immortality, but Pasquier evidently meant the immortality which is bounded by earth and time, not that which is enjoyed beyond the grave, in heaven. I do not pretend to say or insinuate, there were none of these views and feelings; his admirers may have suppressed them, as if the rays of the excellent glory falling upon the dying philosopher would bedim the lustre of his countenance, and render him less worthy of admiration, when beheld catching the first beams of heavenly light, into the full blaze of which he was about to ascend. All I say is, that we have no account of his dying testimony to the truth and excellence, the power and hopes, of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But O how different was the case of his sainted daughter. She also yearned for glory, but it was for the glory to be revealed in heaven; for honour, but it was for that honour which cometh from above; for immortality, but it was for that brought to light by the gospel. A few hours before her death, she said to a beloved friend, "You know we are sisters for eternity; there is life; it

is only there that there is life." She knew that if the earthly house of her tabernacle was dissolved, she had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and that mortality would be swallowed up of life. Contrast the silence and reserve of philosophy, with the full and joyful testimony of faith; the cold negation of the former with the ardent aspirations of the latter; the half averted, anxious, or desponding eye, with which the one looks upon the tomb and explores the world beyond, with the steady, assured, and expecting gaze, with which the other looks upon the fields of light and glory, the promised land, that lies beyond the swelling flood.

III. I now present to you another lesson to be learnt from this event; one the truth of which young people are slow to admit, although it is often repeated by the voice of Providence, and confirmed by the universal history of man, I mean the mortality of youth, and the necessity of immediate and habitual preparation for death. Clementine was removed at the age of twenty-two. "Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; and in innumerable instances, the bud is not permitted to expand into a flower. Death observes no order, but often strikes down the healthy and leaves the sickly; takes the young, and leaves the old. Myriads of both sexes are annually carried off to an early grave by that bane of English youth, consumption, which, like a glutton, devours multitudes, and like an epicure, daintily feeds on some of the rarest and the best. Incipient mortal disease exists in many before it is suspected either by themselves or their friends. While the rose blooms on the cheek, there is a worm beginning to feed upon its root. This may be the case

of some whose eye shall read these pages. No matter the seeming robustness of your health, the buoyancy of your spirits, the elasticity of your step, and the full tide of energy that is still flowing into your frame; your days are numbered, and may not reach far beyond; perhaps not so far as, those of Clementine Cuvier. You may be travelling, not to the altar, but to the tomb: and your eye may have seen, your foot have trodden, upon the spot, where you shall shortly lie. Is it wisdom to forget this? Is it your interest, to say nothing of your duty, to fancy yourself secure from death, till you are worn out by old age? What, when youth is mortal as four-score? Shall you die the sooner by considering your latter end, or live the longer by forgetting it? That very unwillingness to reflect upon your mortality, shows that you have much need to reflect upon it, for it proves that you are unfitted for death. Do consider what it is to die: it is not only to bid adieu to our friends, to give up our possessions, to surrender our hopes, to turn from our prospects; it is not only to exchange all this for the silence, darkness, and corruption of the tomb; the tomb is the least solemn part of death, the more awful is that beyond the grave. What scenes burst upon the mind that next moment after death! All the secrets of eternity; all the realities of the unseen world; all that the Bible tells us of, and more than the Bible could tell of, God, Judgment, Hell, Eternity. Reader, all this is before you, perhaps near to you; you are separated from all this only by the thin partition of flesh and blood, that mere veil which death in any hour may rend asunder, and disclose to you the peopled regions of eternal doom. Be this, then, your prayer, your sincere, fervent, and daily prayer,

"So teach me to number my days, as to apply my heart unto wisdom."

Death is an event for which, come when it may, whether in youth, in old age, or in the middle of life, there should be suitable preparation. "Be ye ready," is the benevolent warning of Him, who in all he said, as well as in all he did, was intent upon the salvation of souls. We ought to prepare for every event which must happen to us, however insignificant, and in matters of importance for every one that may happen. Death is the most momentous, and at the same time the most certain change that can come upon us, and it sets the seal of eternal destiny upon us. As the tree falls so it lies, and as it leans so it falls. "Prepare to meet your God," is a sound which should never be out of your ears, till you can say with the apostle, "I am ready to depart." What tremendous import is there in the word preparation, as applied to a dying hour. But what is preparation? Not a few hasty prayers said by us, or by a clergyman for us, in our departing moments; not taking the sacrament; not saying we are sorry for our sins, and that we die in charity with all men. Many do this who are awfully unprepared for death, and sink to the bottomless pit when they expect to soar away to the regions of eternal glory. True religion, the religion of the heart, a religion of penitence, faith, holiness, prayer; a religion that is a living, abiding, influential principle, rooted in the soul, forming the whole character, producing a holy taste, and dictating holy pursuits; such a religion as is described in the foregoing pages, and exemplified in the life and death of Clementine, this, this is preparation for our latter end. Nothing less than a change which makes us meet for glory can

with propriety be called being ready for death; we are not, cannot be prepared to go away from earth, till we are prepared to go to heaven. "Verily, verily," said Christ, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Our title to heaven is acquired for us by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us in our justification; our meetness, by the work of the Holy Spirit in our regeneration and sanctification; and no one is prepared to go into the presence of God till he is thus justified, renewed, and purified.

A mere death-bed religion is often a delusive thing. True repentance is never too late, but late repentance is rarely true. Neither pungent remorse, nor deep humiliation, nor ecstatic joy, experienced in the prospect of dissolution, if expressed then for the first time, are to be much relied upon: myriads have felt all this, who upon their recovering, became as bad as before, and even worse. Religion is knowledge, deliberate purpose, the choice of a supreme good, the election of the heart between contending competitors for its affections; it is faith, hope, love: say then if this great, this entire moral revolution and renovation can be expected to take place amidst the decays, the struggles, the groans of expiring nature? Can it be looked for that the great work will be done amidst restless days and sleepless nights, the languors of disease, the agony of pain, and the incoherence of delirium? Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Everything but the spirit of procrastination in man says, now; the word of God repeatedly and emphatically says, now; the dispensations of Providence say, now; the uncertainty of life as illustrated in the deaths of the young and

healthy, says, now; the voice of reason and conscience, says, now; the affectionate advice of parents, friends, and ministers says, now; the transcendent worth of salvation says, now; the present happiness of religion says, now; the vanity of the world says, now; the discomfort, and in many cases, the misery of a life of sin, says, now; in short, everything but Satan, the adversary and destroyer of souls, says, now. God says, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts;" and "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth," and it is only the suggestion of the Wicked One to put it off to a more convenient season.

Cæsar Borgia said in his last moments, "I had provided in the course of my life for everything except death; and now, alas! I am to die, though entirely unprepared."

Begin at once and without delay to attend to the just and paramount claims of religion. Make it your next, as well as your great business. Time is short, life is uncertain, death is at hand, judgment is approaching, and eternity is to follow. If you are impressed by reading this memoir and the subjoined reflections; if a serious thoughtfulness comes over you, and you feel inclined to give to religion the attention it deserves and demands, cherish such emotions; they form a crisis in your moral history; they are the disturbance of a dangerous slumber, and will issue either in your awakening to the pursuit of salvation, or in your settling down again to a deeper sleep of death. It is a dangerous thing to neglect such admonitions, and to extinguish convictions. Take the following fact in illustration of this sentiment. "I once," said a pious minister of America, "knew a youth of sixteen, the son and hope

of pious parents, and the favourite of a large circle of associates. He was my friend. We went together to the school-room, to the play-ground, to our chamber. I have seen him, while listening to the pleadings of parental faithfulness, urging him to immediate repentance, and warning him by a brother's recent grave, of the danger of delay. He listened in silence and respectful attention, but the alluring pleasures of youth dazzled him, and he resolved to leave religion for a future day. 'One evening he met a circle of youthful acquaintance. It was a gay circle, and a thoughtless one. In the midst of their mirth, his eye fell on a hymn book. He opened it, and read,

'And must this body die,
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine
Lie mould'ring in the clay?'

He laid down the book and forgot its warning voice. "Late that evening he came to my chamber, breathing short, like one who had been walking fast, and lay down by my side, After some time he turned to me and said, 'Will you get up and give me a glass of water? I feel unwell.' I arose and called the family. He was manifestly ill, but not apparently in immediate danger. The next morning he was worse. A physician was called, but did not understand his case. Search was at length made, and it was found, that by mistake, he had taken a dose of deadly poison. The hand of death was then upon him. For three hours his body was writhing in agony, but that was forgotten in the more excruciating agonies of the soul. I heard his minister tell him of a merciful Saviour. I heard his father, kneeling by his bed-side, pour out to God the most agonizing prayer

for him that language could express. I heard his mother exclaim, 'O! my son! my son!' till she swooned, and sunk upon the floor. I heard him as he tossed from side to side, cry out, 'O Lord, have mercy on my soul! O my God, have mercy on me, mercy! mercy!' and then reaching out his hands towards his father, he exclaimed, 'I am lost! I am lost! am I not, father?' His breath grew shorter, and his voice fainter, until raising his hands as if he would cry 'mercy' once more, he expired. Fifteen years have rolled away since I heard those cries of dying agony, but they ring in my ears now, as if it were but an hour. That look of fierce despair is now in my eye, and my ear echoes with the heart-rending cry, 'I am lost! I am lost! am I not, father?' How can I forget them? They came from the death-bed of my friend, and that friend my own beloved brother. Reader, by my brother's dying groans, by the tears which fall on this paper while I think of him, and by the tears and groans of Calvary, I beseech you, remember and lay to heart the truths you are here taught."

Contrast this fearful death-bed scene with the holy and peaceful close of that lovely young woman, whose memoir forms the subject of this volume. There was no heart-rending cry, "I am lost, I am lost," there: no tones of a desponding voice, no look of an agonized mind, no horrors of a guilty conscience there. No, all was peace, and joy, and hope, the very verge of heaven; and thence, without murmur or regret, she saw the visions of earthly bliss melt away, in the splendour of the eternal day, which was then breaking upon her soul, and disclosing the ineffable beauty of the new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Reader, before you lay down this little volume, pay a visit in imagination to the spot where the mortal remains of Clementine are awaiting in peaceful repose the morning of the resurrection, and the signal of the Archangel's trump, to awake from their slumber and put on immortality. Go to the Cemetery of Pére La Chaise, the most remarkable burial place in the world. Within its vast circumference are deposited the ashes of the pomp and chivalry of modern France. See tombs rising beyond tombs far as the eye can reach, in countless numbers, and in forms so various and so beautiful, that it would seem as if the sculptor's art determined to make the city of the dead vie in elegance with the city of the living: there, surrounded by marshals and nobles, philosophers and scholars, poets and artists, sleeps this young and meek disciple of Jesus. And who that believes in revelation, and looks from the vanities of time to the realities of eternity, would not prefer the simple record of her lowly tomb, to the wreaths of fame which hang on the proudest monuments of unsanctified genius? The visitor may pass by her memorial, to read names that are bright on the page of history, and illustrious in the annals of Europe; or when stopping at the grave of Cuvier to pay a tribute of deserved respect to that great man, may know nothing, and therefore care nothing about his sainted daughter; but when those marbles shall burst open at the blast awakening the dead, it will be found that sincere and humble piety has a greater and more enduring excellence than fame, or rank, or wealth; and Clementine will then come forth to glory, honour, and immortality; while they who sought distinction only in the field of battle, the school of learning, the hall of science,

or the arena of politics, and all that they have done, will be swept away, with the refuse of the nations that know not God.

Remember Clementine Cuvier; and remember also it was divine grace that made her what she was. The same grace, rich, free, and undiminished, remains to make you like her, if you desire to resemble her. Be this your prayer, presented in sincerity, in faith, in fervour, and till it is answered; "God of all power and grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy only Son, our Saviour, enlighten my dark mind, renew my hard heart, correct my worldly taste, and sanctify my unholy life by that divine Spirit, whose beautiful creation has been set before me in this memoir, that I may live as she lived, die as she died, and with her and all thy saints, inherit thy kingdom and glory for ever. AMEN."

MEMOIR OF MARTHA S.

One morning I paid a pastoral visit to a young lady, a member of my church, whose family had not long resided in Birmingham. On my rising to retire, my young friend informed me that she had an invalid sister, whom she expected every moment from her chamber, and who would be much gratified to see me. I had scarcely resumed my seat, before there entered the room, a young person whose features, naturally extremely pleasing, derived additional beauty from a fatal hectic which had been increased by the exertion of coming down stairs. What added to the interest of the scene was the presence of two other sisters, who themselves appeared in delicate health. As soon as Martha, for that was her name, had recovered her breath, I entered into conversation with her on the circumstances of her affliction; a subject, which though in most cases gloomy and depressing, checked not for a moment the sweet smile which played upon her engaging countenance. She soon informed me that she felt she had the sentence of death in herself, and considered her illness as a voice from the tomb; and spoke of dying as one that was familiar with the awful topic. "I have neither love of life," she said, "nor fear of death: and although I

am leaving the world when its prospects were become most flattering and alluring, I do not regret it; I have only one desire, and that is after more communion with God." There was a tear in her eyes, but it was not the tear of disappointed hope, or bitter regret, but only the tribute of nature, refined but not destroyed by grace, and it added a charm to the beauties of holiness, which so evidently invested her character. The whole strain of her conversation was so calm, so collected, so dignified, evincing such meek submission, such humble piety, such weanedness from the world, and such longing after immortality, that I gazed at her with wonder and delight, and left the house thinking and saying that I had scarcely ever witnessed any thing so seraphic.

On subsequent enquiry, I found that the family of which she was a member had suffered much, and often, from the ravages of death. First they lost their father, who died when he was a little more than forty years of age, leaving a widow and a numerous family. A few years afterwards one of her brothers died; then in the course of a few months, a sister; and in about two years subsequently, another brother. Death, when he once enters a large family, seems often to delight in multiplying his victims, and accumulating his spoils, till the late flourishing and numerous household is left but a wreck for a widow's tears to fall upon.

These affecting breaches in the wide circle which Martha had been accustomed to meet in her mother's house, appear to have produced a deep and salutary impression upon her mind. She saw in them sorrowful proofs of the brevity and uncertainty of life, of the vanity of the world, and the necessity of being ready for an early grave. But there were other lessons to be learnt

from these scenes of mortality. She saw what religion was in its excellence and power, in the happy deaths of her relatives, especially in the closing scene of her brother's life. She was the astonished witness of the resignation and patience with which he bore his sufferings, and the peace and hope with which he marked the advances of the King of Terrors. As she ministered occasionally at his sick bed, she listened to his pious counsels, and received his affectionate admonitions; and seeing how a young husband and father was enabled by divine grace to leave the wife of his youth and his babes, not only without a murmur, but with a desire to depart and be with Christ, she became anxious to be a partaker of the piety which yielded him such strong consolation in his dying moments. From that time, now about three years since, the salvation of her soul became the object of her supreme concern; and she sought it, as only it is to be found, by faith in Jesus Christ.

Martha had been declining in health for some time: but on the eleventh of May, on returning from public worship, she ruptured a blood vessel in the lungs. It matters nothing, where, or how, or when the Christian is smitten for death; he is equally prepared for the stroke, whether he be in God's house, or in his own; in his secular pursuits, or in his devotional exercises; in the closet of private prayer, or in the place of public resort; and yet we attach an imaginative interest to some scenes above others. What the subject was which had engaged this pious girl's attention in the sanctuary, or what were her meditations on her way home, cannot now be ascertained; if it could, it would perhaps be found to have been some theme specially adapted to her situation by Him who foresaw the scenes which lay

before her and knew what was necessary to prepare her for them. This attack of disease she received as an intimation that she must be ready for the speedy coming of the Son of Man. Among her private memoranda, she had made the following entry relative to the event, "This dispensation of mercy brought eternity to my view, and in the evening I had the sweet assurance that sudden death could have nothing to alarm me." How strange will it sound to many to hear a young and beautiful woman, with all the ordinary, and some peculiar reasons for wishing to live, talk of an event which would in all probability issue in death, as a dispensation of mercy. Yet this was neither unnatural nor irrational. All things work together for good to them that love God; and death is placed by the Apostle amongst the privileges of the child of God. All is mercy that God does to his people. He loves them with an infinite love, and having both omniscience and omnipotence to fulfil the purposes of his love, he can do nothing contrary to mercy. This it is the business of faith to believe, nothing doubting; and it was one of the triumphs of Martha's faith to believe that even the rupture of a blood vessel was a dispensation of mercy. She at once gave up all hopes of recovering, and many times referred to the day with manifest pleasure.

O how religion changes the aspect of every thing terrible, and makes that an object of complacency, which apart from it, is an object of unmixed dread and dislike. It has power to make afflictions sources of joy, and death a matter of desire.

During her illness, Martha acquired exalted ideas of the heavenly world. Her faith pierced the veil that

hides the unseen state from corporeal vision, and gazed upon the things that are eternal. "I know not," she would often say, "what all the employments of heaven may be, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but I know that I shall be in the presence of God, and see Christ, and that will be enough. I shall be perfectly happy, for I shall be perfectly holy."

At the time of her attack in May, she was engaged to a gentleman to whom she was tenderly attached, and to whom at no distant period she was to have been married. It is vain to suppose that she could turn from the altar to the tomb, and from this dearest of all friends to the arrest of the last enemy, without a severe struggle between an earthly and a spiritual affection. The conflict was short, the victory complete; and it was at once the greatest effort and brightest triumph of her faith, to be made willing to give up even this dear object of her heart, and to depart to be with Christ. In reference to this event she sometimes said, "It is mysterious, but I know it is all right. My heavenly Father knows what is best for me." "I never," says her sister, "saw greater firmness in her, than when she adverted to this disappointment of her hopes."

As I did not apprehend from my first visit that her end was near, and as I was much from home, I did not again see her for some time; and O that all my young friends could have seen her as I then saw her, lovely in death, like a moss-rose bud nearly severed from its stock, and just ready to fall on the ground, with its opening beauties possessing still their freshness and their fragrance. There was not a shadow of impatience, anxiety, or fear, to becloud her beautiful countenance, to check the smile which irradiated her features, or to dim the ray of hope which glittered in her fine expres-

sive eye, as it turned to that heaven whither her heart had already ascended. What painter's skill could pencil the looks which I then saw? All was peace and more than peace; it was peace that passeth understanding, rising into joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ, and Christ alone, was her refuge; and she confessed her exclusive dependence on his blood and righteousness for acceptance with God. She knew in whom she had believed, and was persuaded he was able to keep that which she had committed to him until the day of Christ. I pass over much that was said during that most solemn and delightful interview, but mention one remark: "Do you now feel any regret," I said to her, "that you are leaving the world so early, and when its prospects were becoming so attractive?" With an ineffable smile, she replied, "Our great business in this world is to obtain the salvation of our souls; and having secured that, I have accomplished the end of my existence." Glorious and immortal truth! Noble sentiment! Profound wisdom! Worthy to be printed on the firmament in starry characters, and to be written in sun-beams on the tablet of earth for all human eyes to read, and all human hearts to study. Let the young ponder it at the commencement of the great journey of life: let it be weighed by those who are in the midst of life, and by the aged at the end of life. Gain what we may, life is lost if the soul be not saved; while on the other hand, if the soul be saved, we have secured the end of life, from whatever possessions, or from whatever prospects, we may be called by death to depart.

One day, about this time, Martha said to a friend, "I sometimes regret the time that I spend in sleep, since it deprives me of so much opportunity for communion with God." This was much indeed to say, for

a young person dying of consumption, whose slumber was so much interrupted by feverish restlessness and almost ceaseless coughing, and to whom the hours of sleep ever brought with them oblivion or a respite of her sufferings.

A time was fixed for a last sad interview with her once intended husband. In this scene her faith shone forth in all its brightness, and patience had its perfect work. While all around were filled with poignant grief, she was calm, serene, composed. Having affectionately uttered some pious counsels to this friend of her heart, and pointed him to that heaven on the verge of which he saw her, she took her last farewell, and gave her last look, with a tranquillity and fortitude that surprised every one, and which proved that she was now enjoying too much of the "excellent glory" to suffer intensely from the rending of any earthly ties whatever. She looked up into heaven, and saw Jesus waiting to receive her spirit, and felt that she could leave for Him, even that friend with whom it was once her fondest worldly hope to tread the path of life in company. The scene scarcely ruffled her peace, or drew from her soul one longing lingering look to earth, for heaven was fully in her view.

During a paroxysm of severe bodily suffering which came on soon after, a beloved sister, at her request, prayed with her, which greatly soothed her, and she then desired the family to be called into her chamber. "Sing some hymns to me," she said, "for though I cannot sing with you, I can join by repeating the words." It was done, as well as the feelings of her sisters would allow, and their voices sounded in her ear as the distant echoes of the songs of the Redeemed above, which she was soon to join. Becoming drowsy, she

said, "It is sweet to fall asleep singing the praises of God."

"In the midst of sufferings too painful to describe," said her sister in a note, "Martha could smile, and tell us Jesus was near to her. Her countenance at all times animated and happy, was unusually so now; it beamed with ineffable brightness, and was a strong and beautiful evidence that all was perfect peace within. When she could no longer articulate, she looked all we could wish her to say. About five minutes before she expired, her agonies ceased, she recognised all of us, and as though to bid a last farewell, she smiled, and exclaimed, 'Happy, happy!' Blessed state of mind! to smile and exclaim, 'happy, happy,' even in the cold arms of death.

So died Martha S. Her last farewell to earth was uttered with the consciousness and the feeling that she was treading at that moment upon the very threshold of heavenly glory: and who need wonder that she could speak of happiness even in dissolution. As she drew near her everlasting home, she saw the lights of her Father's house, and unconscious of the gloom of the dark valley of the shadow of death, from the midst of which she beheld them, she gave expression to her feelings in a note of holy rapture, and left the world with accents which we may easily imagine were also the first she uttered as she touched the heavenly shore, "happy! happy!"

Behold, Young People, another convincing proof and beautiful display of the power and excellence of religion, in the deep submission, the solid peace, the joyful content of this young lady, when called not only to resign life in the very morning of her day, but to turn from the altar to the tomb. When the symptoms of decline

appeared, and the sad presages of her disease showed themselves in a form not to be mistaken, there was no terror, no determined clinging to life, no dreadful recoil from death; but a meek, gentle, and peaceful acquiescence in the will of God. What opportunity did not a consumption leave her, through sleepless nights and months of confinement at home, to think on all she was leaving; and yet through all this time, she could see, without repining, the visions of earthly bliss successively vanish, because she knew that in their place she was going to receive joys, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

It cannot fail to be remarked that although her dying experience was eminently characterised through the whole of it by her own selected term "happy," yet she was a total stranger, like Clementine Cuvier, to the ecstacies into which some have been transported in the hour of transition from time to eternity; but far more was she a stranger to those alternations of hope and dread which now raise the soul to the very gate of heaven, and now fill it with despair; "least of all was she likely to be haunted by those spectral forms of departed guilt, which sometimes steal back even on the forgiven and accepted spirits under cover of that cloud of night, in which anguish and the terrors of approaching death so often involve mortality. She was full of joy and hope, but it was joy and hope, tranquil, serene, and unfaltering. This of all states of mind, in which the Christian can meet the dying hour, is surely the most enviable; the most satisfactory to herself, and the most impressive to spectators. Such deep solemn tranquillity of soul at such a moment, is the surest evidence of the reality of religious character, and best illustrates the power of religious truth. It can

in no degree be attributed to a fictitious source; to the illusions of a perturbed imagination, or to that morbid excitement, that preternatural radiance, which disease (or opium) will sometimes impart to the intellect, and which resembles the delirious splendour it can sometimes kindle in the eye." Such was the state of mind of both the young persons whose death is narrated in this volume: it was not the rapture of imagination, excited by either material or spiritual stimulants, but the joy of reason, elevated, sustained, and sanctified by faith.

A SHORT MEMOIR OF MISS A. S—.

Another branch of this family has been carried to the tomb, and the redeemed spirit of Anne has followed her sister Martha to the realms of immortality. The family left Birmingham in 1838, to reside in the Isle of Man. I paid them a parting visit, and saw but too clearly, that I was taking my last leave of the subject of this brief sketch. She was not positively ill, for she went about as usual, but she was drooping, and a short hectic cough sounded in my ears like a prediction of her early death. I shall never forget her serious, calm, and collected manner, and the hallowed repose of her countenance and conversation. She broke through her natural reserve, and, though with great modesty, spoke with considerable freedom on the momentous realities of the gospel of our Lord. She was evidently aware of her danger, and appeared to me to have her eye fixed on the cloud which had received the spirit of her sister out of her sight, when she ascended to glory. It was a solemn interview; we prayed, and then parted for ever,

till we shall meet at the gathering together of the saints to Christ. She left for the Isle of Man, and after suffering a few months, under the disease which had reduced the family to a wreck, she was removed to heaven.

Anne appears to have been decidedly pious long before her last sickness came upon her, though from a natural timidity and reserve, she disclosed her feelings to few. Meek, gentle, and retiring, she grew like the violet in seclusion, and matured for heaven and glory, seen but by few.

"When she bade adieu to her friends in Birmingham," says her sister, in a letter to me, "she was persuaded their next meeting would be in the presence of God. You will recollect your last visit, the remembrance of which you said was never to be forgotten; through a long and painful illness she would revert to it, adding, in allusion to what had at that time been said, 'Yes, the finished work of Christ, is my only hope, my only ground of acceptance.' "Soon after we were settled in Douglas, the Scotch Minister, our Pastor, called to see her; indeed he was a frequent visitor, and I have heard him say, in all his experience he never witnessed such strong proof of the power of divine grace, in sustaining the soul in the prospect of death, as in this case. All who saw her bore a similar testimony. I cannot remember a single instance in which she was heard to murmur or complain. Her medical attendant would often say she was a patient sufferer. When she was spoken to on the subject of her affliction, she would instantly say, 'Call it not affliction; it has never been one to me. I have no wish to live. Many I love are in heaven, and Jesus is there!' I shall pass over days and nights of protracted suffering, every moment of which gave testimony that her soul was ripening for glory, to the closing scene of her illness. One circumstance, I cannot omit, as it shews the bias of her mind in reference to eternity. The last night in the year 1838, she expressed a wish to be awake, just as the new year was ushered in. On being asked the reason, she replied, 'I began this year in the fear of God. I then had a strong impression I should end it in his presence. It seems I shall be absent a little longer, but I should like to commence the new year, praising him.'

"The seventh of January was her last conflict. I wish I could send you what I witnessed; yet language could but feebly tell the

perfect triumph over the sting of death. Through the day it was evident her end was drawing near, though it was not anticipated quite so soon. In the evening her suffering became extreme. For a few hours she was indeed called to pass through 'the fiery trial,' but even then her countenance, distressed through great suffering, would frequently become bright and animated, and looking up to those surrounding her, she would say, 'Be not discouraged because you see me suffer; call it not dying, it is only an entrance into life everlasting.' And then she added, 'Jesus, fetch thy servant. I am not ashamed to own thee.' When she was a little better, and still expecting a return of suffering, she raised her eyes, and said, 'Remember, if I am too ill to speak in my last moments, I die happy, unspeakably happy.' She charged us all to meet her in heaven, saying that 'a few prayers and a few tears would not be sufficient to sustain the soul in the last conflict.'

It pleased her Heavenly Father to spare her any return of suffering. In the last hour she seemed to be perfectly refined from all dross. I could only look on her as one who had seen the glories of the New Jerusalem, and was permitted a little while to hold converse with us. Being raised up, she repeated part of the last chapter of the gospel by Matthew, making her own observations as she passed along, dwelling more particularly on those words, 'He is not here, he is risen,' exclaiming in ecstacy, 'My Saviour is risen! and why? That I might rise with him.' She then spoke of that beautiful tract 'The Refiner of Silver,' adding, 'It is Jesus who sits watching the crucible; that moment he sees his image there, he will bid me come to him.' Here her joy became so great that she said, 'I must be strengthened before I can behold the full glory of God.' Upon a friend remarking, 'What a beautiful and heavenly countenance,' she replied, 'If there is any thing beautiful there, it is my Saviour's image reflected, not I.' Becoming exhausted, she wished to sleep. Before she closed her eyes, she bid farewell to those who surrounded her: shortly after she whispered, 'I am in the valley now, it is not dark, I see a light, my Saviour is conducting me through—he is coming.' In a few minutes she gently fell asleep in Jesus. So gentle was her dismissal, that the spirit had left its clay tabernacle before we were well aware."

Gentle, pure, happy spirit, thou art with Him who washed thee in his blood from all thy sins, regenerated thee by his Spirit, and meetened thee by his grace to dwell in his presence! Thy relatives who have passed on

to glory before thee, had long beckoned to thee from the heavenly strand, and have now welcomed thee to that blissful shore, from which sin and sorrow are for ever excluded. Short and soon over was thy voyage, and having happily and early escaped the storms that sweep across the troubled sea of human life, by the fury of which so many are wrecked, thou hast entered that haven of peace, where no tempest rises, and no breakers roar.

Youthful reader, think of these two holy sisters, whose short annals you have now perused, and what think you? "Lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not (long) divided." Ask the question of yourself, if you, amidst the gaieties of youth, and the pursuits of vanity, have yet tasted equal happiness in life, to that which they found in death. Is there not something here that is impressive, instructive, and requires your attention? What must religion be that can "Make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are." If religion can thus strip off the terrors of death, and transform a dying chamber into the vestibule of the heavenly temple; if it can make the soul almost insensible to the agonies and throes of the last conflict; and amidst the adieus of the final separation, can enable the departing spirit to smile in peace, and utter words of joy and triumph, while all she is leaving are dissolved in tears, what must be its excellence and its value, and what, if you submit to its influence, would be its power to bless in life?

While your feelings are moved by the perusal of the foregoing narratives, and your heart is softened for the impression of divine truth, I would lay before you a summary of the motives to youthful piety.

It is commanded by God. "Remember now thy

Creator in the days of thy youth." Whose ordinance is this? God's. The eternal and omnipotent God interposes with his authority, and enjoins the practice of piety upon every youth of each sex. And she is a rebel against heaven, and setting out in life a traitor to the Most High, who is not giving her heart to love God, her life to glorify him. Religion is not only your duty at some time, but your duty now. It never will or can be more binding upon your conscience than it is at this moment.

Youth is the only season of which you can be certain. You may die, as millions have died, in the morning of your life. Your sun may go down ere it is noon; and in that case, should you neglect religion, no other opportunity of attending to its momentous duties will ever be afforded you. There may be but a step between you and death; and from death to the bottomless pit, there is but one step more, for all who die without religion.

If you should live, and live to old age, the great probability is, that if you neglect religion in youth, you will neglect it for ever. The mind is never likely to be more at leisure, nor more inclined to religion than it is at this moment; on the contrary, its impediments and its disinclinations are sure to increase. Moreover, nothing short of the grace of God can convert the soul; and is he likely to bestow that grace hereafter, which is refused and despised now? By far the greater part of those who ever become pious, became so in their youth. If therefore you decide to put off this concern now, you will put it off, in all probability, for ever. Now or never is the alternative. You ought to feel as if this were the only accepted time; as if all eternity depended on the present hour; for it probably does.

Youth is the most favourable time, and that on every account. Cares, anxieties, and perplexities are few, the faculties of the soul are vigorous, the senses and energies of the body are lively, the heart susceptible, the conscience tender, the habits flexible. When the mind is full of the cares of a family or of a business, or the heart hardened by a long course of sin, or the conscience benumbed by repeated acts of resistance, or the soul grown carelessly familiar with all the most solemn topics of religion, is that a more suitable or likely time for beginning attention to piety?

Early piety is propitious to our temporal comfort, as well as to our eternal welfare. "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." If, on the contrary, it were inimical to all our interests in this world; if it prevented us from ever gaining wealth, and doomed us to abject poverty; if it drove us out from society, and confined us to convents and monasteries, yea, to caves and dens of the earth; if it made us objects of universal dread and detestation; if it impaired our health, and required us to end a miserable life by the agony of martyrdom; if it converted earth into a wilderness where not one spot of verdure, nor one spring of consolation was to be found; if in short, it transformed our world into a purgatory, and our sojourn in it into a term of unmixed torment; still if it were necessary for the eternal salvation of our immortal soul, we should be fools to neglect it: how much more then, when it blesses us for time, as well as makes us happy for eternity; when it softens the cares, sweetens the comforts, protects the interests of earth, as well as guides us to the felicity of heaven! It guards our health, by keeping us from those vices which impair it; plants a fence

around our property, by saving it from those sins that waste it; preserves our peace of mind, by restraining us from those actions which disturb it; makes us frugal, industrious, and trustworthy; and thus spreads its wings over all that is most valuable in life; while on those very wings, it raises us to glory, honour, and immortality.

It is the most happy life; and can you be happy too soon? Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace. Its privileges and its duties, its present influence, and its future prospects, all lead to happiness. If it could make Clementine and Martha peaceful, composed, happy in death; if it could enable them, and thousands like them, to turn with a smile from the altar to the tomb, to accept with tranquillity the shroud instead of the bridal attire, and to quit with unmurmuring acquiescence the most brilliant prospects, for the dark valley of the shadow of death; if its capacity and power to bless could not be destroyed even by these circumstances; if it can make the soul joyous under the uplifted dart of the King of Terrors, can it be otherwise than a never-failing spring of delight amidst the trials and the activities of life?

It is the most honourable life; and can you be invested with its rich and valuable distinctions too early? It is said, that "Jabez was more honourable than his brethren." And why? Because he was pious. God bears the same testimony where he says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." The pious are honourable in their birth; for they are born from above, born of God, his sons and daughters by regeneration. They are honourable by their titles and relations; for they are citizens of Zion, servants of Christ, wards of angels,

children of God. They are honourable by their character, for they are possessors of truth, lovers of virtue, conquerors of Satan, competitors for the crown of glory, and imitators of God. They are honourable in their destiny, for they are going on to sit down with Christ on his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with his Father on his throne. They are honourable now; their glory shall shine forth at the last day, when the honours of earth and time shall set amidst the smoke of a burning world; and their honours shall flourish upon their brows with amaranthine beauty and freshness through eternity.

Piety is the most useful life; and can you too speedily begin to be a blessing to others? Religion will keep you from doing harm by the poison of bad principles, or the silent pestilence of an evil example. It will keep you as you pass along the path of life from seducing others into the bye paths of immorality and infidelity; from increasing the groans and multiplying the tears of humanity; from blasting the temporal interests and ruining the immortal souls of your fellow creatures. "My principles," said a dying infidel, "have poisoned my friend, my extravagance has beggared my wife, and my example has corrupted my boy."—Horrible confession! Religion would have prevented all this. It leads none by its influence to the hospital, to the workhouse, to the jail, to the hulks, to the gibbet, or to that last general and eternal receptacle of lost souls, the bottomless pit; on the contrary, it keeps from all these. It is a source of instruction to the ignorant, of alms to the needy, of consolation to the wretched, of virtue to the immoral, of holiness to the wicked, and salvation to the lost. It blesses by the silent yet potent influence of example; by words and deeds of bene-

volence; by the efficacy of prayer; by the active power of a holy life; and the passive power of a happy death. Would you begin the world and pass through it, then, a blessing to your species, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth."

Religion in youth will, if you should live to be old, accumulate upon you the comforts, the honours, and the respect of an aged disciple. Yours will be the hoary crown of righteousness, the old man's glory. Yours will be the calm summer evening of a long and holy day. The young will look up to you with veneration, the middle aged for counsel, and all with affection.

There is something both of awful and of amiable goodness in a disciple of Christ, who has passed in honour the probation of seventy or eighty years. Not only is he esteemed and valued in the church, but even the infidel is abashed before his august and God-like presence.

It is a powerful motive to early piety, that it would gladden the hearts of your parents by putting an end to their most distressing solicitude concerning you, answering their most fervent prayers, gratifying their most ardent wishes, rewarding their most anxious labours, awakening their most exalted hopes. O gladden the soul of your father, and cause your mother's heart to sing for joy!

Multitudes have regretted that they were not pious in youth, none have regretted that they were so. In the midst of deep and complicated cares, sorrows, sins, and reproaches on earth; and in the midst of still deeper and more complicated torments in hell, many have exclaimed with a horrible emphasis of woe, "Would God I had remembered my Creator in the days of my youth." On the other hand, how many during the

trials of their pilgrimage below, upon the bed of death, and surrounded by the excellent glory in heaven, have said in a rapture of gratitude, "Adored be that grace which led my youthful feet into the paths of piety!"

Religion commenced in youth, and sustained through a long life in unvarying consistency, will be followed and crowned with future honours in the heavenly world. There are different degrees of glory in heaven; the nature of the case proves it, and the word of God confirms it; and the fact is presented in scripture as an incentive to diligence, a stimulus to exertion. Salvation, I know, is all of grace; and justification before God is by faith without works; no man will have the smallest ground for boasting that he has deserved or obtained heaven by his own doings: one universal shout of "Grace, grace," will burst from the lips of redeemed millions, as they turn their eyes to the Lamb, who has bought them with his blood; but still, there will be degrees of glory. But look up by faith into the heavenly kingdom, as it is revealed in the book of God; see the many thrones that are set, and the many crowns that are prepared for the people of God; ask the question whose are the highest seats, and the richest diadems; and the oracle declares, theirs, who live longest and do most for the glory of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Wherefore, remember your Creator in the days of your youth."

THE END.

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